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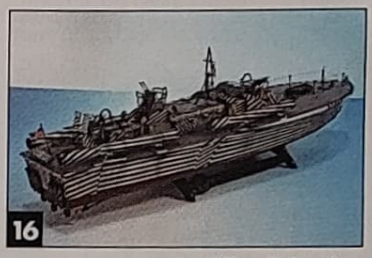

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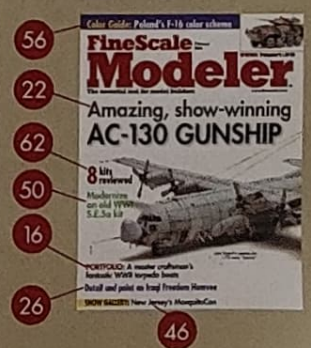

John Vojtech's 1/72 scale AC-130H Gunship. Jim Forbes photo

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Editor's Page

Molly's Tornado: A guest editorial

I thought you would enjoy the following story related to us by frequent FSM contributor and Advisory Board member Pat Hawkey about how he got his wife to better understand his hobby. – *Ed.*

In the middle 1980s, I served my pro modeler "apprenticeship" with contract work from out of state. The business was mostly in mahogany model imports, but occasionally someone would want a subject not available in wood, so one of the handful of guys where I worked would get the kit, decal sheet, work order, and a deadline. Those deadlines were tight and firm.

At the time, I was dating Molly. When I had to work a few Saturday nights on models that were on a short schedule, she would come to my place just to hang out.

"Can I help?" she asked one evening. Hmmmm. Maybe. I gathered all the big pieces I could find and showed her how to fit and glue. She did a nice job on the simple stuff , but I was reluctant to turn her loose on detailing. Then I got to thinking, if she was game …

"Want to build something yourself?" I asked.

"Sure. OK."

I rummaged around in my model storage above the garage rafters for an expendable kit and found a 1/72 scale Monogram Tornado. Perfect. Something simple that I wouldn't miss. I told Molly a little bit about the subject, and with all my tools, supplies, and coaching at her disposal, she was off.

Keep in mind Molly had no real background in crafty kinds of things. Her interests had been more athletic and intellectual, so she was not used to working with her hands on small objects. I don't think she enjoyed it all that much. She was determined though, and I think she wanted to impress me.

How I taught Molly the "funnest" part of modeling

The painting stage meant teaching her how to use an airbrush. I mixed paints and thinned them for her but didn't worry too much about correct shades of color.

"This is the fun part," I told her.

I think the fun was lost on her as she tried to shift focus between the model and the camo pattern on the instructions. She might have enjoyed it less too because she knew I was such a stickler for accuracy.

When the paint was dry, I introduced her to decals. "This is the fun part," I said, trying to encourage some enthusiasm from her.

"I thought painting was the fun part," she said.

I corrected myself: "Decals are the funnest part."

With many tiny "No Steps" decals to be aligned perfectly down the length of the wing, Molly found decals to be no fun at all. The noises made and words mumbled as she fought slivers of slippery material with her tweezers made me wince. But she finished it.

She seemed delighted that she had seen the project through to the end. (By my rough estimate, it was 80 percent her work.) And though she didn't ask to try another, I think she developed a much better appreciation for what I do. That was worth a lot.

Molly's been my wife for 16 years now. Her Tornado shares showcase space with my own small collection. When she inquires about my model projects, and the subject of decals is mentioned in any way, she unfailingly reminds me in the tone of an expert, "They're the funnest part."

– Pat Hawkey

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Got a modeling problem? Q&A is here to help. Send your questions to Questions & Answers at the address at left under "General." Or e-mail your question to questions@finescale.com. We are unable to conduct research such as answering questions on markings and unit histories. We publish letters of general interest; the volume of mail prevents us from answering every question in the magazine. Please include your name, address, and a daytime phone number. You may get faster answers to general modeling questions by checking out "Hobby FAQ" at www.finescale.com.

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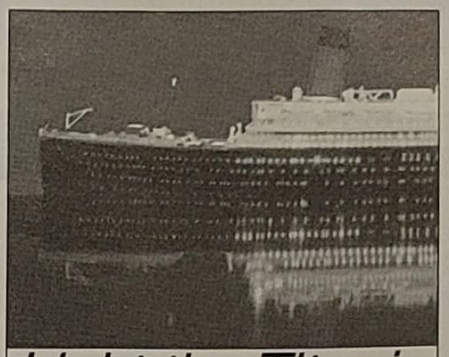

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Models needed for Iraq

I would like to thank all the great folks back home who have given the time and money to donate models to the Baghdad Model Club.

As a high school teacher in "real life" before being called up with the National Guard and shipped off to exotic places such as Iraq, I have been an advocate and advisor for a couple of school-based model clubs. The club here, located in an easily accessible area of the military encampment, has been eagerly patronized by many of the soldiers stationed in Baghdad, including some allied soldiers. Hobbies know no boundaries!

The purpose of this note is to acknowledge our appreciation to the many donors, but also to let them know that as a result of increased participation and interest in the club, the models available are dwindling in number. I have made it a point to share not only my supplies (paints and hobby tools) but also to bring fellow soldiers to the club. If they are not able to go because of duty hours, I have taken models and supplies to them.

The other significant needs are water-soluble paints and hobby tools (knives, tweezers, and brushes). Soldiers, both male and female, are interested in all kinds of kits: planes, ships, cars, military vehicles, and sci-fi.

– SSG Raymond W. Hildebrand
Iraq

Here's why

The people who donate to the Baghdad Model Club affect the soldiers here more than they know. Modeling is a welcome escape from the reality of war and gives us a glimpse we need of home. I am truly proud of the way modelers have shown their support for the American soldier. Thank you all.

– Sgt. Michael Thode
Camp Liberty, Baghdad
Iraq

Heading home

I have been stationed in northern Iraq since last December. In that time, the members of the North Olympic Peninsula Modelers Society, especially Rich and Joy of R&J Products, and Gustavo D'Agostino, have supplied the members of Task Force Dragoon with an abundance of models and supplies. Some old modelers were reborn, and some new additions to this wonderful hobby were given their start. We want the people who supported us to know what a boost to morale their contribution was.

– SSG Timothy Koshak
Iraq

Liberty and Victory

Thank you for the article on the Liberty Ship in the December 2005 issue.

My father was in the Naval Reserve during World War II and served in the Armed Guard on several Liberty Ships in the South Pacific. I am building my model as the *Flying Dragon*, the last ship he was assigned to. When I saw you were doing an article on the *Jeremiah O'Brien*, I waited with baited breath for the issue. It was well worth the wait and will help me a great deal with my construction.

But I must correct you on one point. A third Liberty Ship survives; it's the *Lane Victory*, berthed in San Pedro, Calif.

My 16-year-old son and I spent a day on a cruise aboard this great ship. It has been refurbished just as it was in World War II. Those responsible for the ship are fantastic! You can experience fly-bys and re-enactments of aerial attacks, and the crew dresses in period uniform.

Anyone in the Los Angeles area who is at all interested in this history should consider a day cruise. The Web site is http://www.lanevictoryship.org. This will give all the info you need, including cruise dates.

– Randy Robbins

Associate Editor Jeff Herne notes the Lane Victory *is not a Liberty Ship, but a close relative, a Victory Ship, which is larger and faster than a Liberty. Two complete Liberty Ships survive.* *– Ed.*

Misplaced flux capacitor

The cutaway F-105D (October 2005 FSM) is a beautiful piece of work. I served in the USAF from 1961 to 1965 as a Fire Control/Weapon Control Technician on the F-105D/F. For a while, I was assigned to the flight line and had an occasion to work on wires in an area we called the "ball room." It's that area entered via a hatch in the bottom of the bird just in front of the bomb bay and behind the wheel well. As I recall, it was completely empty. The builder shows a sectioned-off area with some boxes plus his "flux capacitor," but modeling anything in this area might be in error.

– Claud Pipkin
Houston, Texas

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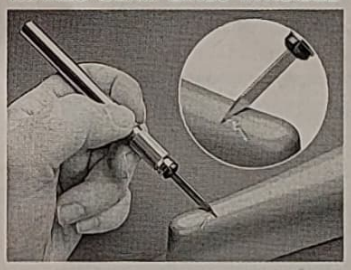

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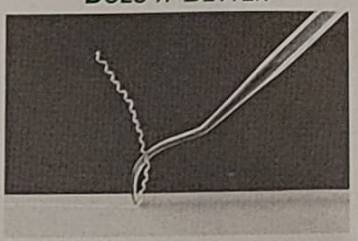

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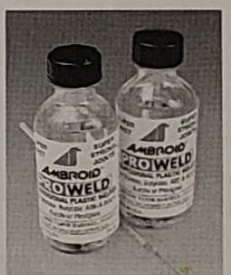

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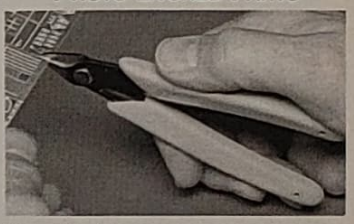

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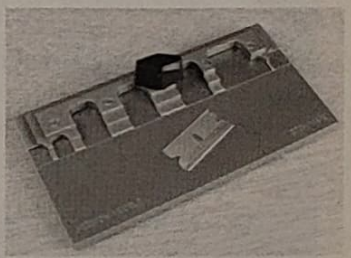

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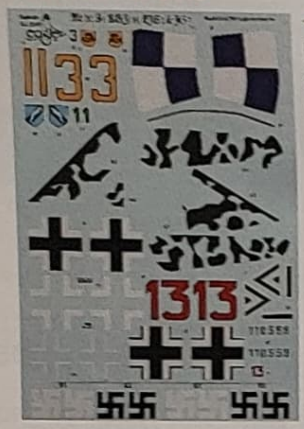
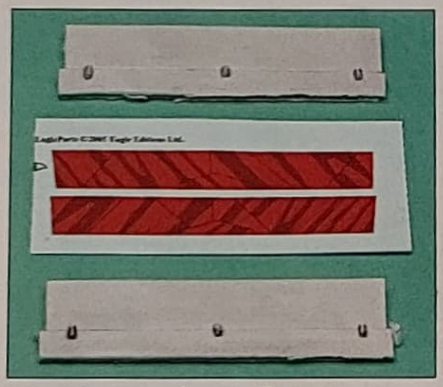


◀ **Me 262A-1s KG(J)6 JG7,** No. EC32-96, $11.50. From Eagle Editions Ltd.

Me 262A-1s KG(J) 54, EJG 2, JG7, No. EC32-95, $11.50. From Eagle Editions Ltd.

1/32 Detail Sets



▲ **Fw 190D-9 wooden wing flaps,** No. 59-32, $15. From Eagle Editions Ltd.

1/48 Scale Kits

▲ **CH/HH-46D Sea Knight U.S. Navy version,** No. 12207, $55. From Academy, available from Model Rectifier Corporation.

Phonix D.II Austro-Hungarian WWI fighter, No. SH48036, $34. From Special Hobby, available from Squadron Mail Order.

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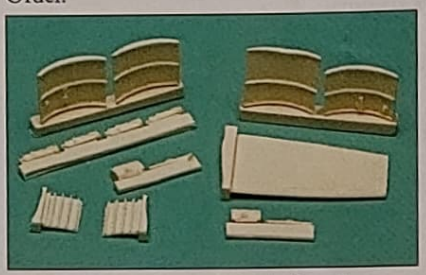
▲ **B-17G bombardier section for Revell-Monogram,** No. 48508, $9.98. From True Details, available from Squadron Mail Order.



▲ **B-17G waist gunner section for Revell-Monogram,** No. 48510, $9.98. From True Details, available from Squadron Mail Order.

▲ **B-17G cockpit set for Revell-Monogram,** No. 48509, $12.98. From True Details, available from Squadron Mail Order.

Exhaust covers for Hasegawa Hornets for F/A-18 A, B, C, D, No. 48-R001, $6. From VF-Decals.

Late-style centerline pylon for Hasegawa C-D Hornets, No. 48-R002, $3. From VF-Decals.

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▲ **Kamov KA-50 SH "Night Hunter,"** No. 7272, $12.95. From Zvezda, available from Dragon Models USA.

Hunting Percival Pembroke C.1 "Cold War," No. SH72105, $38. Injected canopy. Look for a detailed review in an upcoming issue of FSM. From Special Hobby, available from Squadron Mail Order.

Bristol Beaufort Mk. Ia/II Home Islands and Malta area, No. SH72083, $35. Injected canopy. From Special Hobby, available from Squadron Mail Order.

A-35B Vengeance, No. SH72049, $25.50. Injected canopy. From Special Hobby, available from Squadron Mail Order.

L-212 Electra Junior with gun turret, No. SH72094, $32. From Special Hobby, available from Squadron Mail Order.

▲ **Hispano-Nieuport NiD-52,** No. A041, $21. From Azur, available from Squadron Mail Order.

Koolhoven FK-51 Spanish version, No. A064, $25.50. From Azur, available from Squadron Mail Order.

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▲ **SdKfz 251/4 Ausf C and leFH18/40,** No. AF35S28, $59.98. From AFV Club, available from Merit International.

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Ammunition Set No. 35/1 5cm Pak 38 for Panzer III and Puma, No. 35501, **Ammunition Set No. 35/2 for 12.8cm PzSfl/Pak, Jagtiger and Maus,** No. 35502. Contact your local dealer for price information. From Attack.

1/72 Scale Kit

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▲ **Pz Bef 38(t) armored car,** No. 351, $9.98. From UM, available from Squadron Mail Order.

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SdKfz 139 Marder III panzerjäger, No. 347, $10.98. From UM, available from Squadron Mail Order.

▲ **15cm SIG 33 auf Jgd Pz38 (t) Hetzer,** No. 72810, $21.98. From Attack.

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▲ **T-34/76 Mod. 1941,** No. 60150, $15.95. From Dragon Armor, available from Dragon Models USA.

38cm RW6 I Auf Sturmtiger Germany December 1944, No. 60113, $15.95. From Dragon Armor, available from Dragon Models USA.

Super heavy tank Maus, No. 60156, $22.50. From Dragon Armor, available from Dragon Models USA.

HMMWV with ASK M1025 (Task Force I-77 LSA Anaconda Iraq 2004), No. 60066, $9.95. From Dragon Armor, available from Dragon Models USA.

Maus super heavy tank (V-2), No. 60154, $22.50. From Dragon Armor, available from Dragon Models USA.

38cm RW61 AUF Sturmtiger Germany March 1945, No. 60114, $15.95. From Dragon Armor, available from Dragon Models USA.

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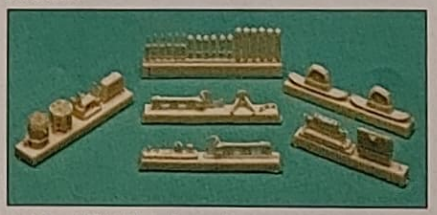

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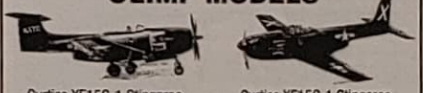

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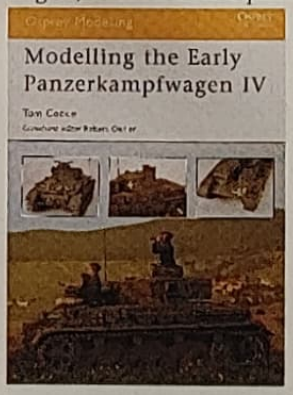

◀ ***Modelling the Early Panzerkampfwagen IV,*** $17.95, by Tom Cockle, soft cover, 80 pages, 207 color photos. From Osprey Publishing.

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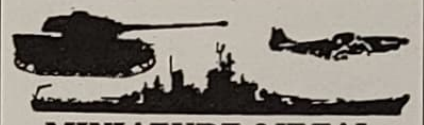

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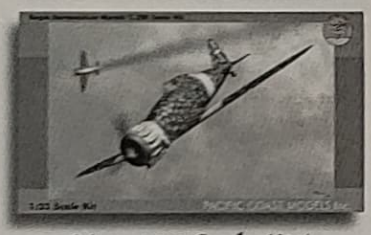

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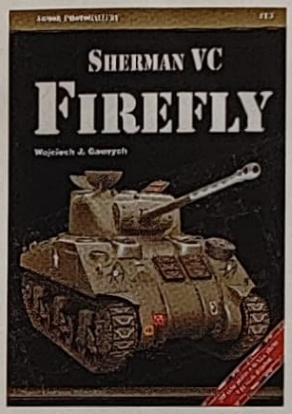
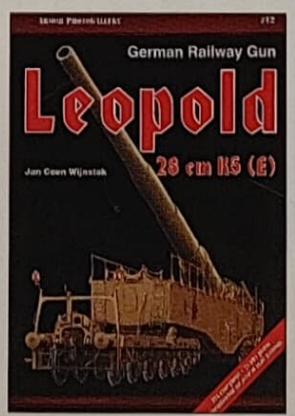


◀ ***Sherman VC Firefly - Armor PhotoGallery No. 13,*** $47.95, by Wojciech J. Gawrych, soft cover, 80 pages, 260 color photos, 45 black-and-white photos, 6 scale drawings. From Progress Publishing, available from Squadron Mail Order.

◀ ***Modelling the T-55 Main Battle Tank,*** $17.95, by Nicola Cortese, Graeme Davidson, Sam Dwyer, soft cover, 80 pages, 245 color photos. From Osprey Publishing.



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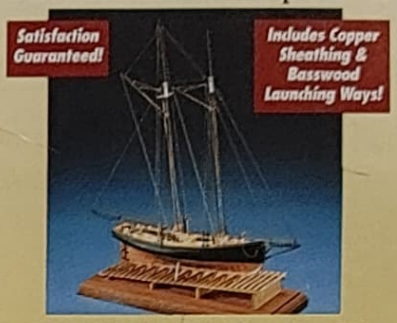

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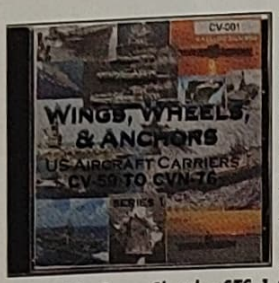

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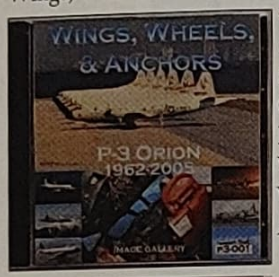

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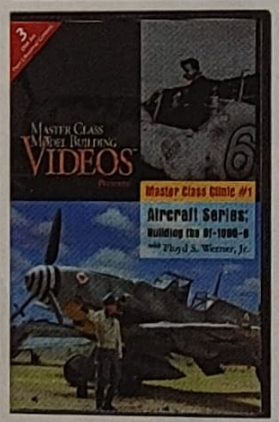

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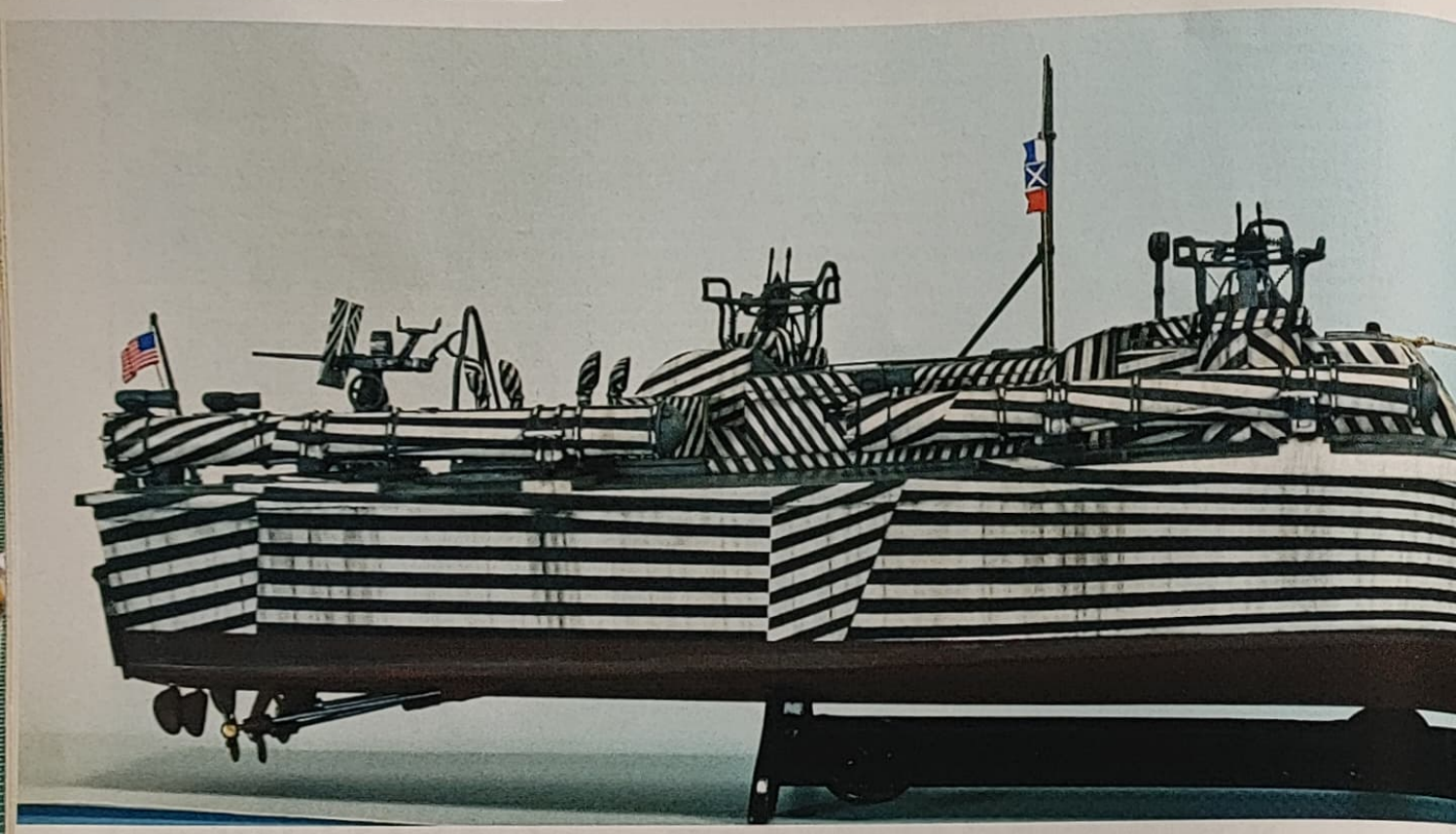
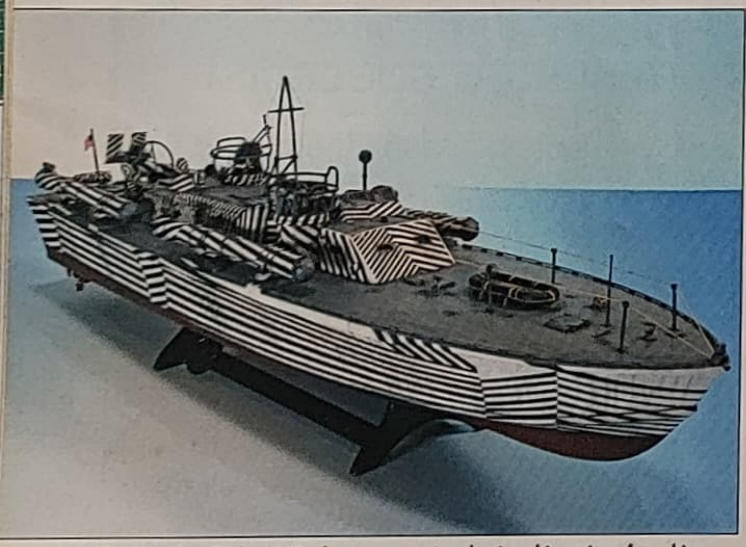
Portfolio

Alfonso Berlana's 1/72 scale torpedo boat trio





The complex "Adapter" scheme was painted using thin strips of masking tape. Alfonso used Tamiya acrylics to apply the zebra stripes.

During World War II, torpedo boats developed into fearsome weapons. Small, fast, and heavily armed, they attacked both merchant and naval vessels with great success.

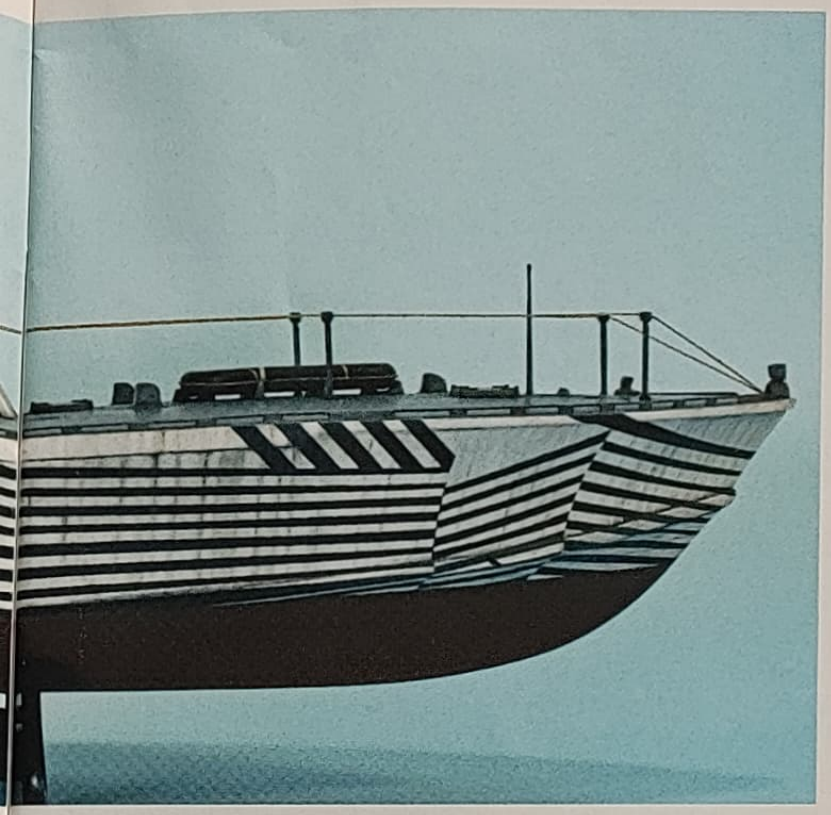
The United States, Britain, and Germany developed torpedo boats to suit their operational requirements, and despite having a common purpose – delivering torpedoes – each was different.

Alfonso built examples of three famous types of torpedo boats in 1/72 scale: the U.S. 80' Elco PT boat, the British Vosper Mk.I, and the German *S-100* class Schnellboot. **FSM**

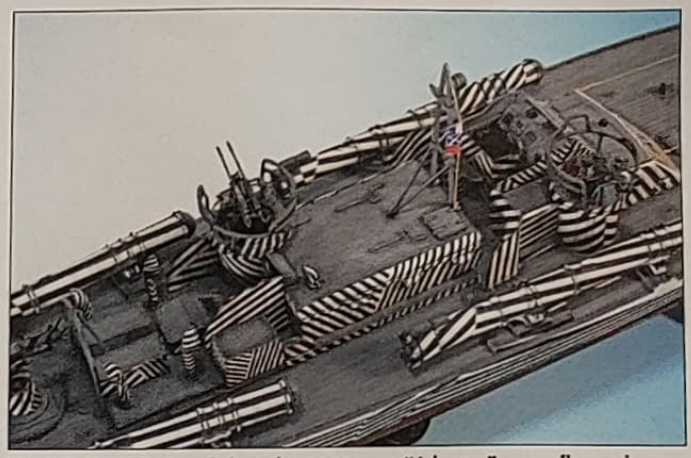
80' Elco PT boat

Several U.S. companies, including Higgins, Huckins, and Elco, built Patrol Torpedo (PT) boats during WWII. Of all the manufacturers and variants, Elco's 80' craft was the most numerous. When the war ended in 1945, 326 80' Elcos had been built, and 296 saw service with the U.S. Navy during and after WWII. Canada received 30 boats, and Russia received a single example for evaluation purposes. The most famous 80' Elco PT was *PT-109*, commanded by then future United States President John F. Kennedy. Today, only a handful of 80' Elco PT boats survive, with several preserved as museums.

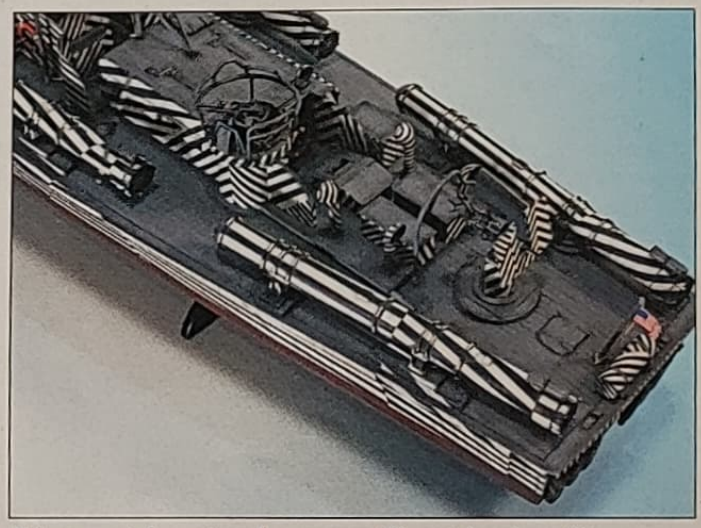
By Jeff Herne
Photos by Alfonso Berlana



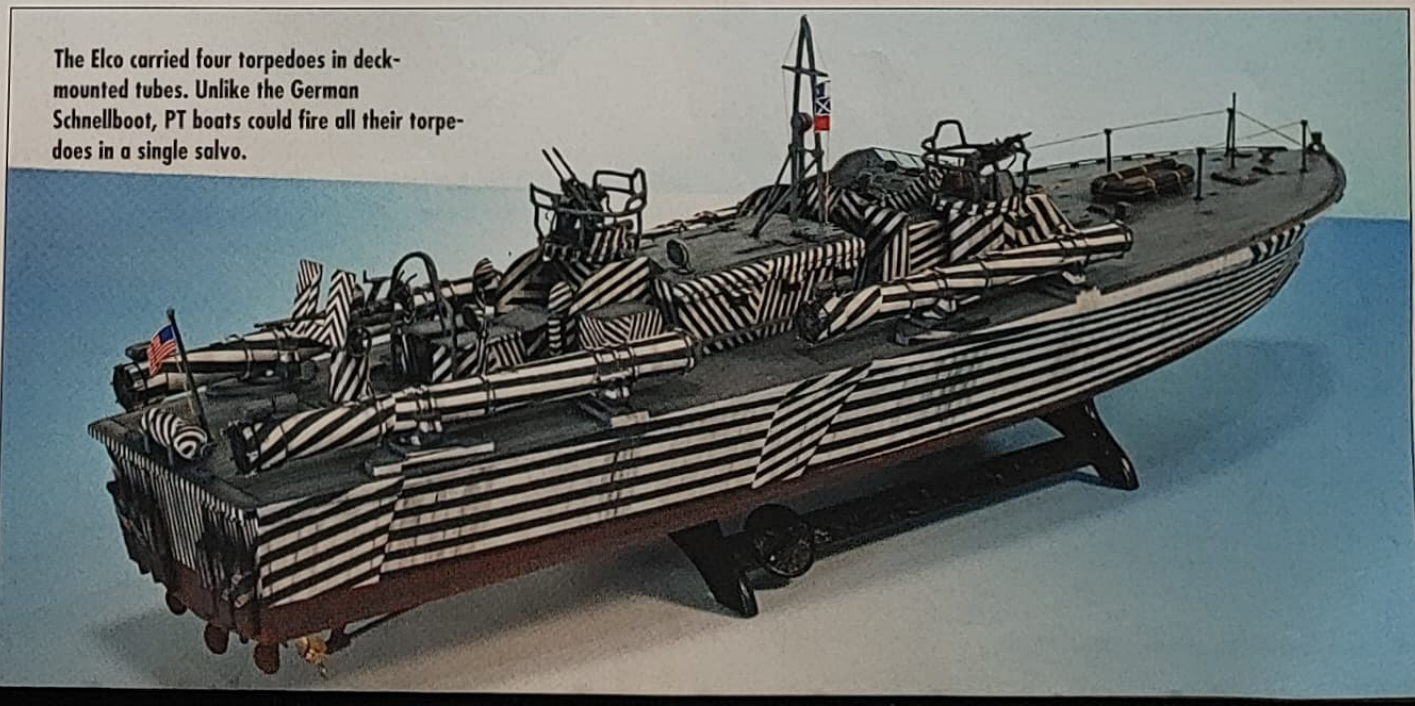
The Revell Elco PT boat has been around for more than 40 years and is still readily available. Alfonso painted his model in an experimental zebra-stripe dazzle scheme developed for the U.S. Navy.



The U.S. Navy designed the zebra-stripe, or "Adapter" camouflage scheme, to break up the outline of the ship and make it difficult for enemy gunners to determine range and course.



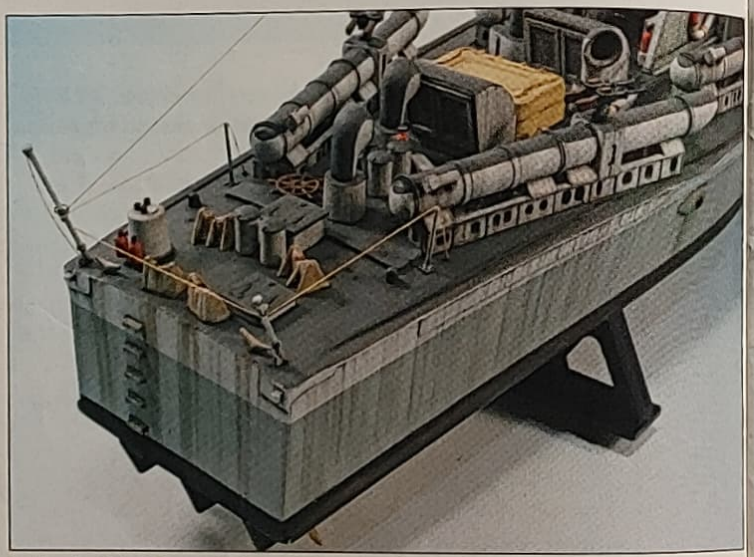
PT boats carried a variety of weapons – Alfonso's boat has a 20mm Oerlikon on the stern and twin .50-caliber Browning machine guns.



The Elco carried four torpedoes in deck-mounted tubes. Unlike the German Schnellboot, PT boats could fire all their torpedoes in a single salvo.

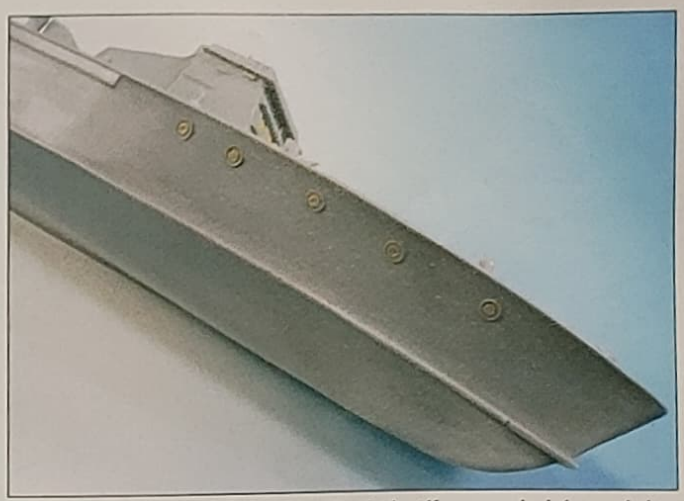
Although not as sleek as its German or U.S. counterparts, the British Vosper Mk.I Motor Torpedo Boat (MTB) was powered by three 1,400 horsepower engines and had a top speed of 40 knots. The Airfix Vosper kit, like the Revell PT boat, has been in production for decades.

The Vosper Mk.I is only 73' long, yet retains the same basic armament as the PT and Schnellboot.

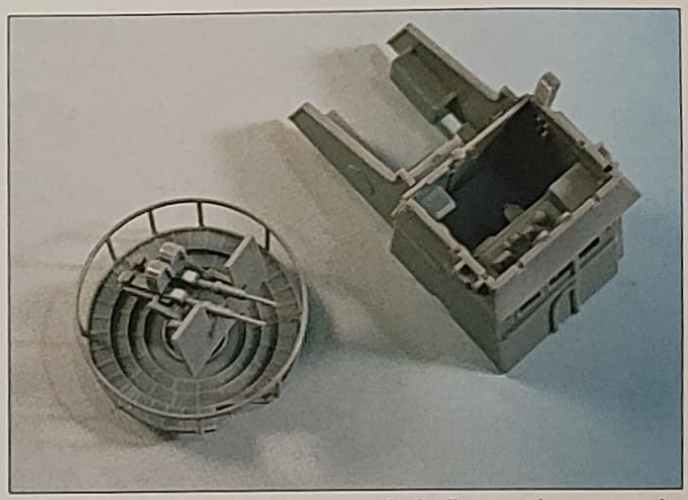


Unlike the U.S. PT boat, the Vosper's torpedo tubes are fixed into position on the main deck. Note the spare wheel strapped to the deck.

The Vosper's wheelhouse is far more utilitarian than the Schnellboot and is unarmored. Twin 20mm Oerlikon cannons provide protection against air attacks.



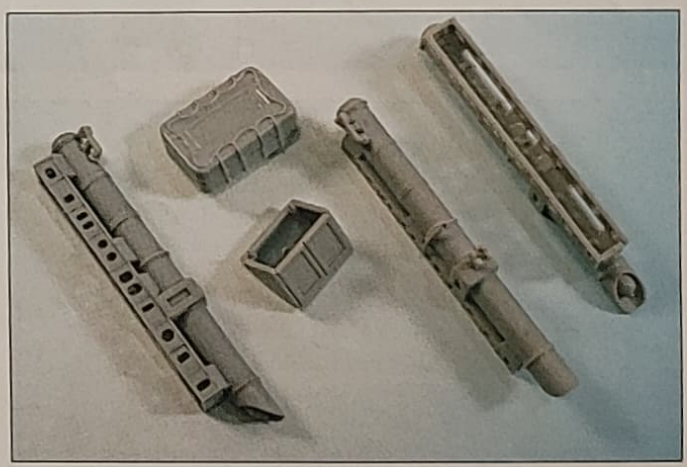
After building the hull and attaching the deck, Alfonso masked the portholes and wheelhouse windows with masking tape for painting.



Alfonso added small details to the guns and wheelhouse with styrene stock but otherwise built the model straight from the box.

Vosper MTB Mk.I

The British company Vosper developed a series of Motor Torpedo Boats (MTBs) for use against Axis coastal shipping. Years of wartime experience resulted in the changes to the boats ordered in the 1943-44 naval contracts. These vessels were known as Type I Vospers, and 17 boats, including the pre-production MTB 379, were built. The Type I carried four 18" torpedoes in single fixed tubes, twin 20mm Oerlikon antiaircraft guns forward, and two twin .303-cal. Vickers machine guns on the after tube mounts.



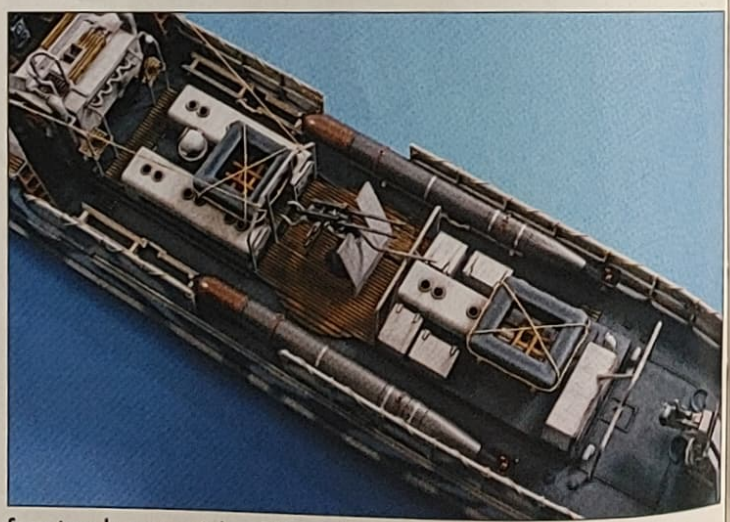
The kit's torpedo tubes look great right from the box but required some alignment.

The *S-100* was a sleek, high-powered torpedo boat. Driven by three 2,500hp diesels, the Schnellboot carried a crew of 30 men and had a top speed of 45 knots, despite its 115' length. Alfonso painted the Revell Germany kit with Tamiya and Vallejo acrylics.

S-100 Klasse Schnellboot

Developed from the *S-38* class torpedo boat, the German *S-100* was a culmination of improvements based on operational and wartime experiences. The basic design of the boat remained unchanged with the exception of the "Kalotte," or armored bridge, and additional antiaircraft weapons. The armored bridge was added to the ship to afford the crew protection from small-arms fire.

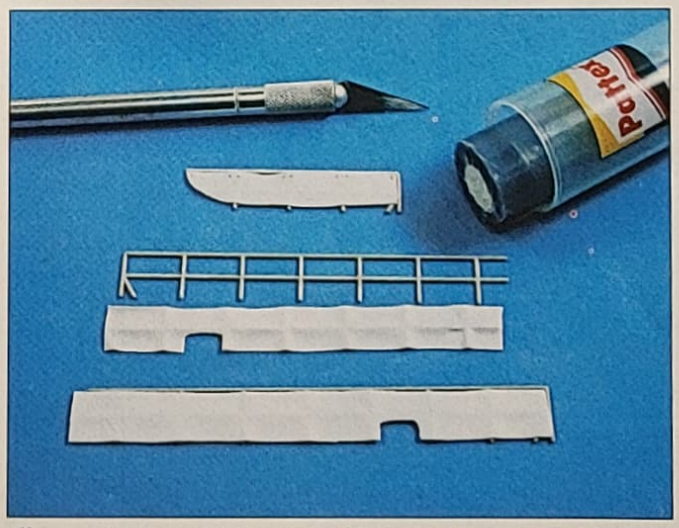
Production of the *S-100* class started in 1943 and ended with the end of hostilities in May 1945. After the war, boats saw service with Denmark and Norway, were built under license by Spain, and were used by British and American intelligence agencies in European waters. Today, only one Schnellboot, the *S-130*, survives.



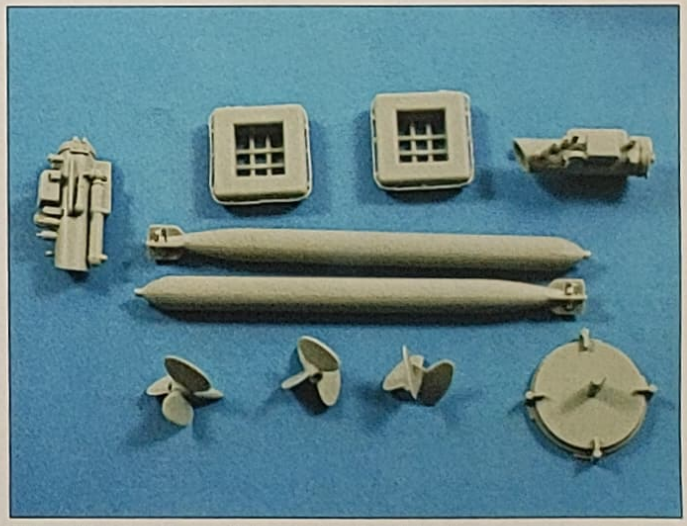
Spare torpedoes are carried amidships on the *S-100*, and 37mm and twin 20mm antiaircraft guns provided protection from air attacks.

The *S-100* was unique – the torpedo tubes were integral with the forward hull, and the forward 20mm gun was recessed into the deck. The bridge structure, or "Kalotte," was armored.

Three rudders, three props, and a specially-shaped hull created the "Lürssen effect," a hydrodynamic phenomena that gave the Schnellboot its high speed and good handling.



Alfonso made the spray dodgers from thin sheets of Pattex putty he rolled flat and formed to the rails.

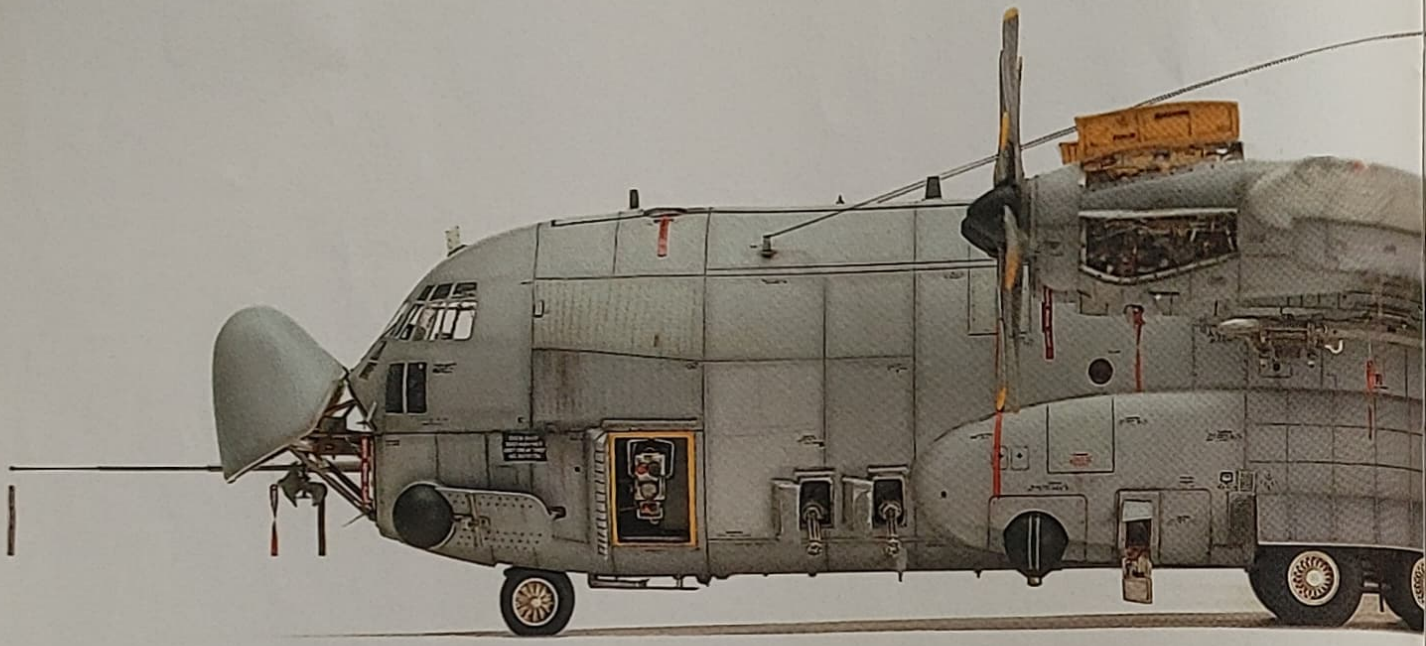


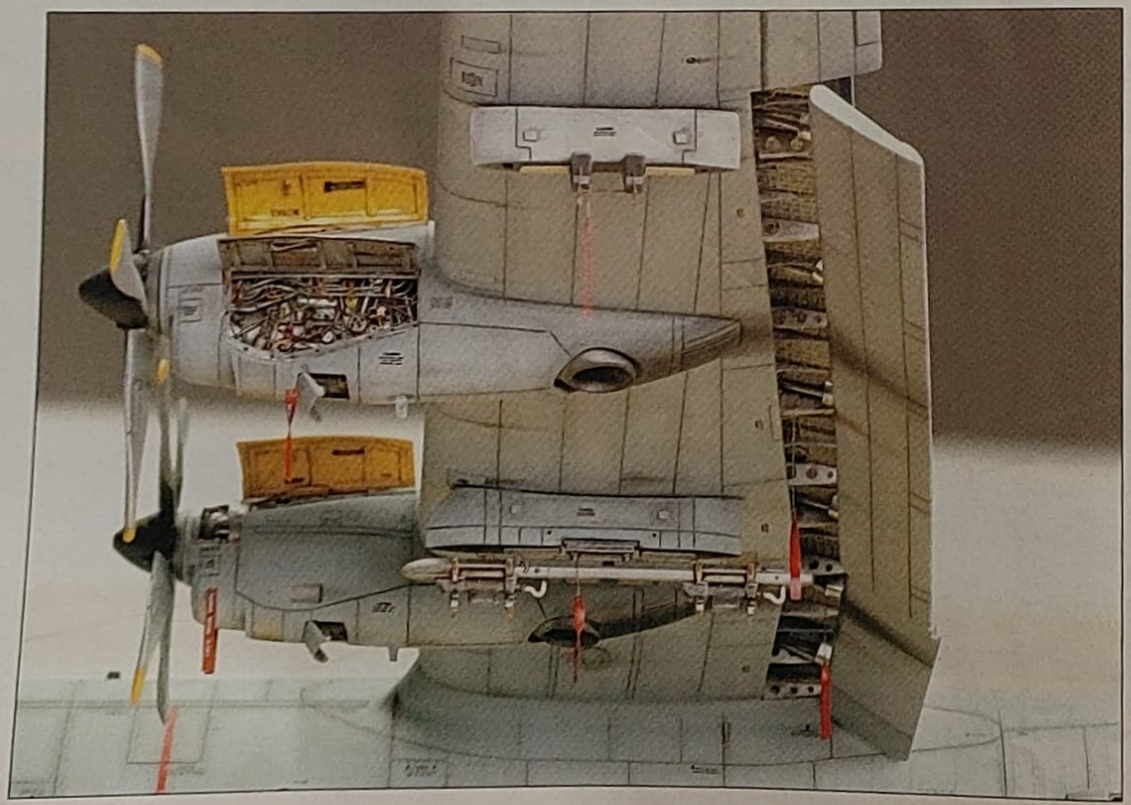
Alfonso built the kit-supplied torpedo tubes, life rafts, props, and torpedoes straight from the box.

Showcase

John Vojtech's AC-130H Gunship masterpiece

Photos by Jim Forbes





The amount of detail incorporated into John's 1/72 scale AC-130H gunship is amazing. The model took top honors at the 2005 IPMS/USA nationals in Atlanta.

Seven years ago, John Vojtech started his Esci 1/72 scale AC-130H gunship, intending to finish it for the 2001 International Plastic Modelers Society/USA national convention in Chicago. But the enormity of the project and "real life" issues got in the way, and John had to step away from the modeling bench for a while. He finished it for the 2005 nationals in Atlanta, however, and it was the most-talked-about model airplane in the contest. It was not idle chat either, as it won Best Aircraft and the coveted People's Choice award.

The detail of John's model is staggering. Much of the fighting cabin can be seen through the open loading doors in the rear of the fuselage. A few Eduard photoetched details are used on the model, but nearly everything is scratchbuilt, including the 105mm and 40mm Bofors cannons. Add to that two completely wired and plumbed turboshaft engines, dropped and detailed flaps, opened nose radome, and several accessories, not to mention the completely rescribed and re-riveted exterior. He used every material at his disposal: styrene, metal, wood, wire, and epoxy putty.

John devoted more than 4,700 hours to the gunship project.

The view from underneath the wing shows the engines, dropped flaps with all of their interior-wing detail, and the multiple ejector racks used to carry ECM and flare/chaff dispensers.

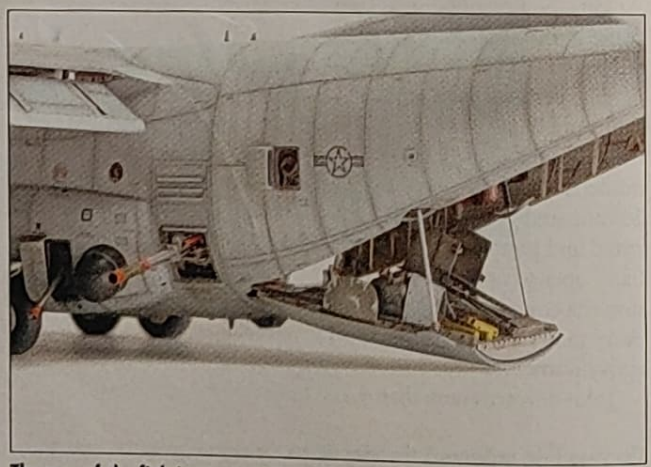
Along the way, a close encounter with a halogen lamp melted the nearly completed forward fuselage. Rather than toss the whole model in the trash, John cut off the damaged area, grafted on a new one using parts from a second kit, and took a 2,000-hour penalty stroke.

John has lived in the United States for 10 years and is originally from a town near Prague in the Czech Republic. His current home in Deerfield, Ill., is shared with his wife, Tina, and eight-year-old son, Justin. He has developed his own master and molding company and further occupies his time as a property manager.

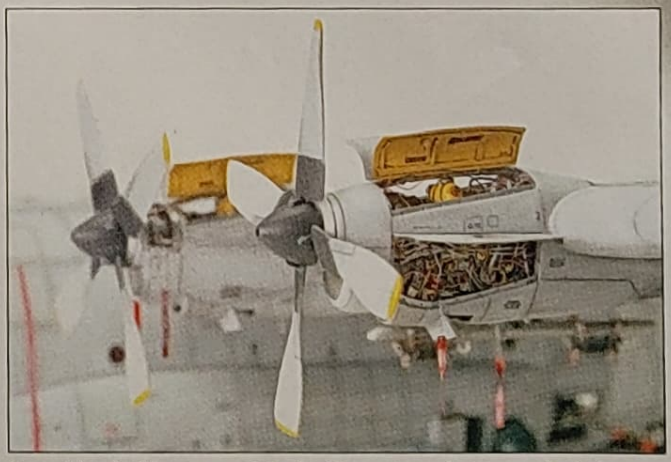
John is a member of several modeling clubs, and now he's made a name for himself at the national and international level. Let's see what he does next! **FSM**

All of the external panel lines and rivets were carefully engraved.

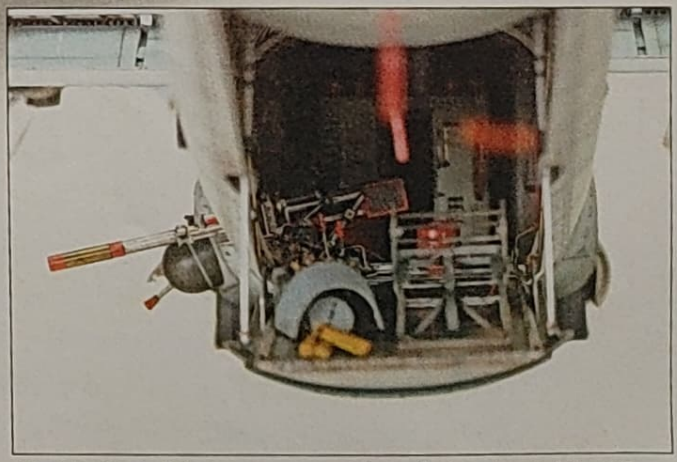
Here's a closer look at the Gatling-style 20mm cannons, the low-light-level TV and laser viewer in the forward hatch, and the infrared sensor dome in the forward end of the left landing-gear sponson.



The rear of the fighting compartment houses the big guns: 40mm Bofors and a 105mm cannon, along with a beacon-tracking radar and powerful searchlight. Detached covers, wheel chocks, and other equipment are stored on the rear loading door.



Several hundred hours went into detailing not one, but two turboshaft engines. The nacelles are only an inch and a half long!



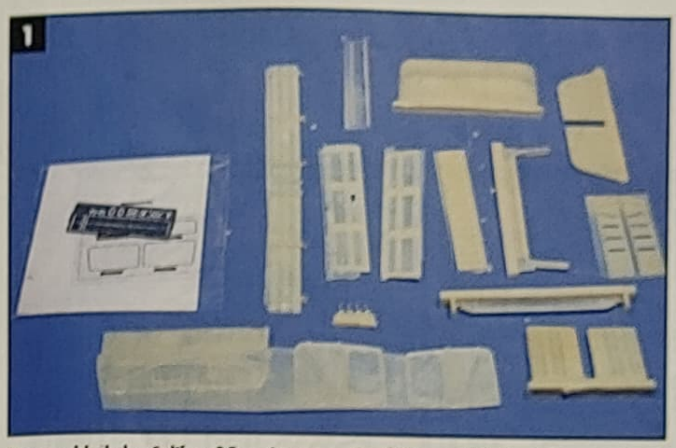
A look inside the fighting compartment shows the breech end of the 105mm cannon.

Heavy-duty Humvee

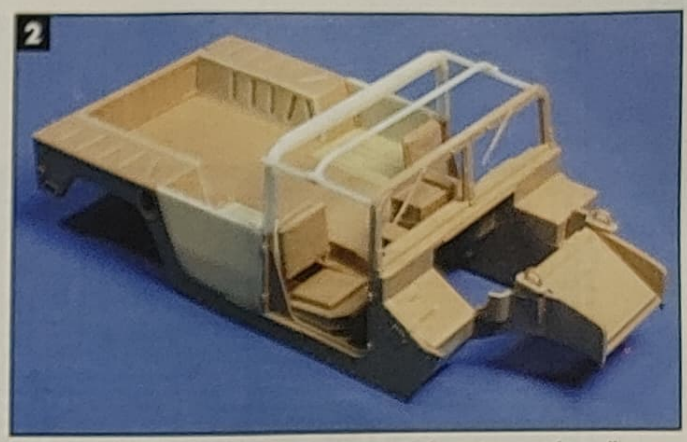
Building and weathering an M998 Humvee

By Brett Avants

WHILE SURFING THE INTERNET, I found a series of great shots of an engineer Humvee. The vehicle was based at Camp Warhorse in Iraq and was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade that failed to explode. The Hummer in those photos was just begging to be modeled, so I set out to duplicate it in miniature. It wasn't fancy – just an open-topped pickup version of the M998. The weathering, though, made the vehicle.



Brett added the Calibre 35 resin conversion kit to model the pickup version of the standard Humvee.



The Tamiya kit required little modification, and the resin parts fit well.

Brett originally chose Trackz resin wheels but switched to parts from Blast after he noticed the Trackz wheels had the earlier tread pattern.

With the major assembly complete, it's time for paint.

Building the kit

I started with the 1/35 scale Tamiya kit, which is a real gem. It is very detailed and the fit of the parts is great. I built the Humvee pretty much straight from the box, only substituting aftermarket resin wheels for the kit parts. I did not build the rear seats, the TOW missile racks, or the other racks for the rear of the truck. Since I was building the cargo carrier version, none of these parts was necessary.

The Tamiya kit is the standard version of the Humvee, so I needed the Calibre 35 M998 cargo conversion set to complete this project, **1**. This set is nicely molded in cream-colored resin. The parts are thin, maybe too thin. Some of the parts were slightly warped, so I used a blow dryer on low heat to soften the resin and straighten them. Cleanup is fairly easy, except for the rear bed seats and back rests. These required a lot of cleanup. Use a good file and a sharp hobby knife. All in all, this was an easy conversion set to use.

The cab and bed details in the Calibre 35 set fit perfectly. Everything worked like a charm and looked great, **2**.

I originally had the cross-beams above the cab with the canvas drape between the rear bed and the cab, but after deciding to duplicate the M998 from Camp Warhorse, I carefully removed those pieces. I also noticed the Trakz resin wheels I originally intended to use (as shown on the in-progress photos) were the early type tread pattern and not the ones used in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), at least not on the vehicle I was modeling. So I substituted the Blast Models resin wheels for the Trakz wheels, **3**. The moral of the story: Don't change the vehicle midway through construction! Or, careful research beforehand prevents a lot of extra work during the construction phase, **4**.

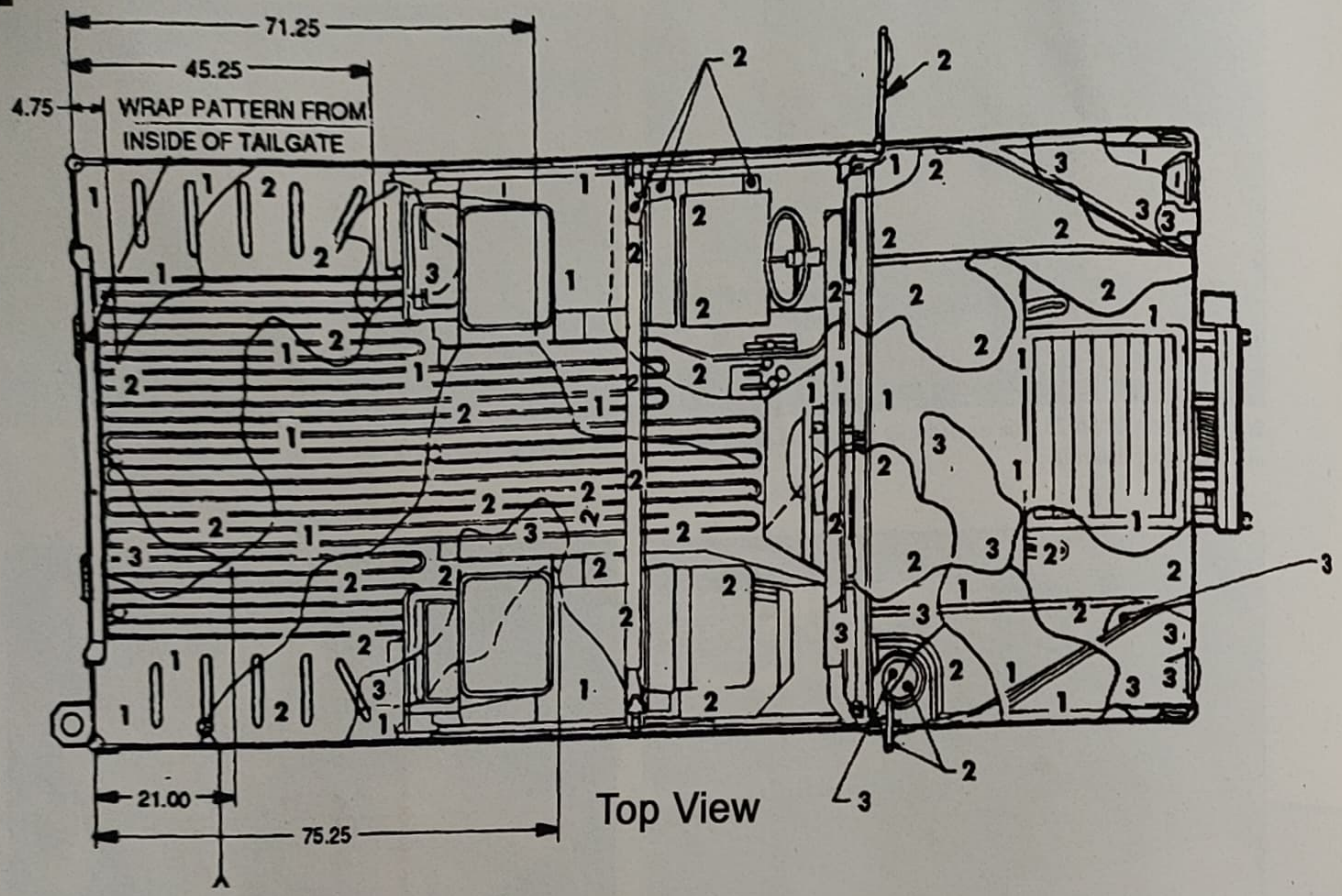
Painting and weathering

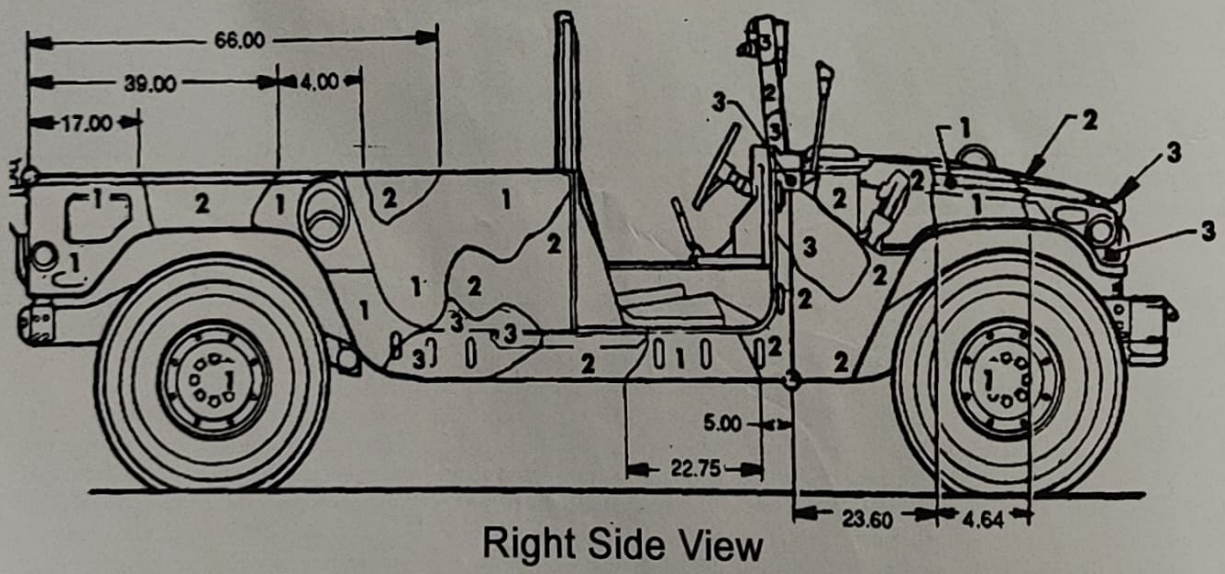
The real fun of this kit was the painting and weathering. I used MIG and MMP pigments extensively for the weathering process. If you have never used pigments to weather models, then I suggest you give them a try. They allow you to give the model a completely different look than typical washing and dry-brushing.

I printed the appropriate pages from the U.S. Army technical brief TB-43-0209, **5**, **6**, which showed the M998's official U.S. Army color scheme. I used green and brown colored pencils to color in the areas of the Hummer's camouflage scheme for an easy-to-read diagram.

I painted the entire model with Tamiya

5





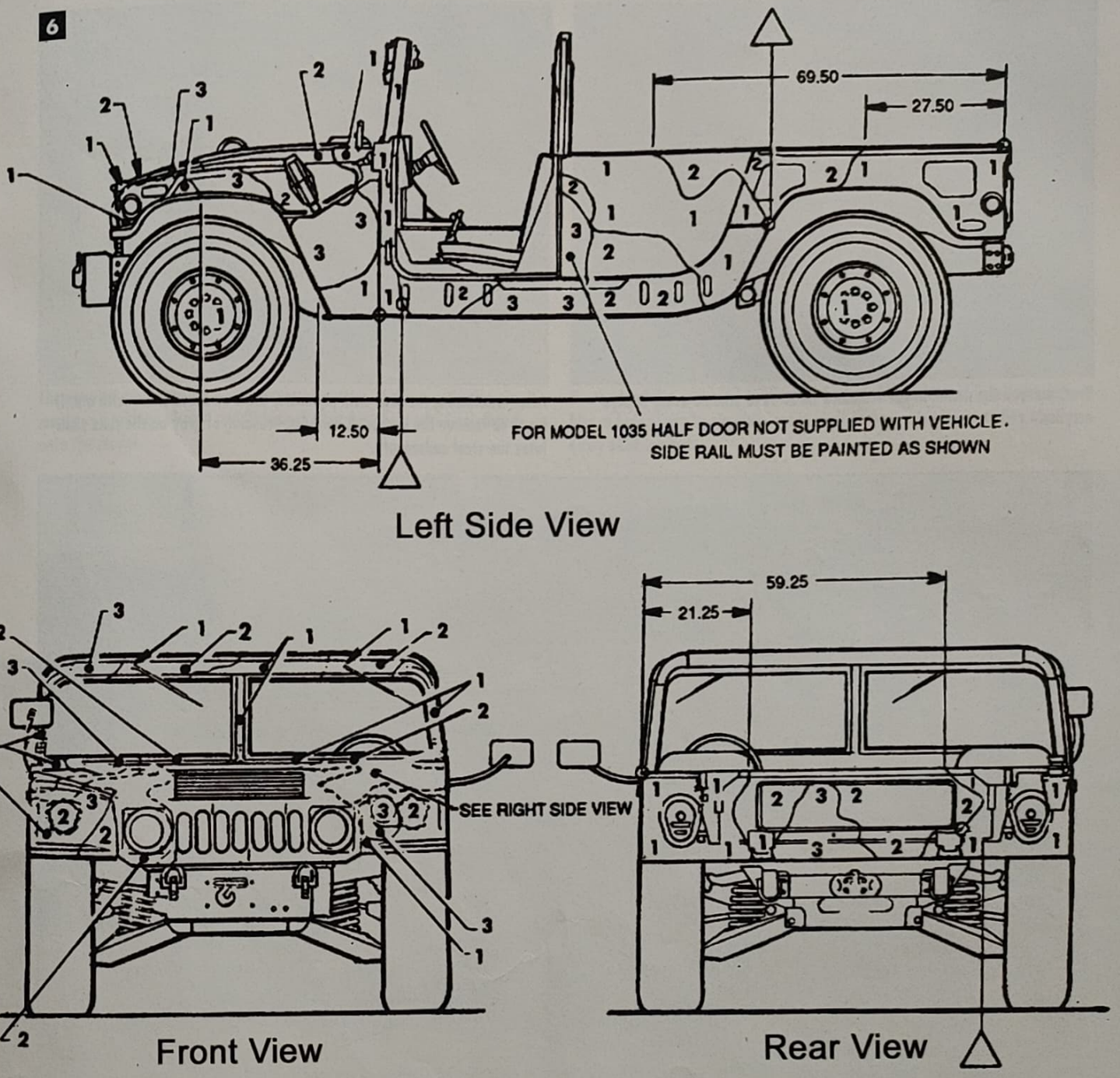
Brett used actual painting templates for the Humvee from the U.S. Army tech bulletin TB-43-0209.

flat black, then painted the camouflage using Tamiya NATO green (XF-67) and NATO brown (XF-68), using my color plate as a reference, ***7***.

Next, I painted all of the details, including the instrument panel, seats, gear shift levers, and radio. I also applied the small decals to the information plates found on the dash of the vehicle.

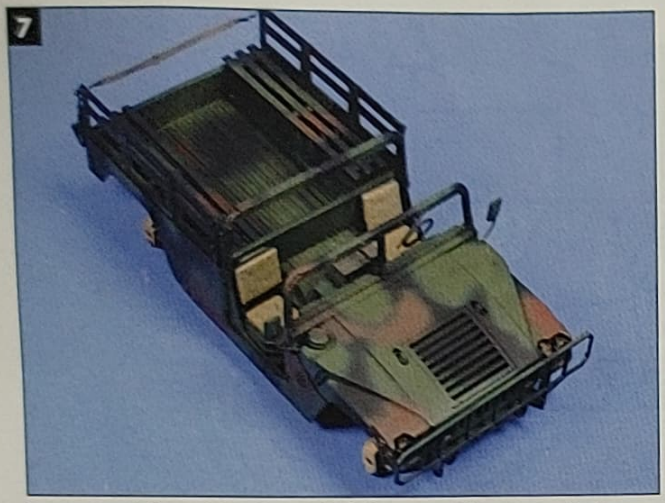
After the paint had dried overnight, I gave the vehicle a wash of Mars black oil paint, about 90 percent thinner and 10 percent paint. Then I washed it again with burnt umber thinned to the same consistency. I don't really measure, but just eyeball it. I let this dry again overnight.

I used a series of different applications of pigments to get the weathered effect of

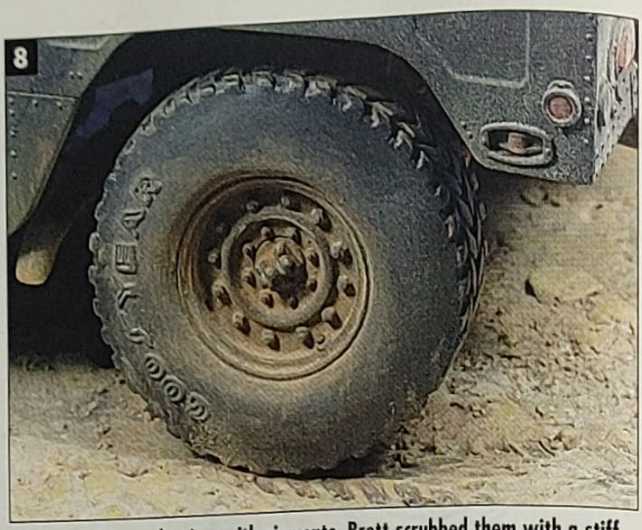


the Humvee I was modeling. I first weathered the vehicle undercarriage and the wheels. I simulated this by mixing MMP weathering powder sand No. 5 with a bit of MIG pigment light rust in a soupy mix with rubbing alcohol. The mixture is about 30 percent pigment with 70 percent alcohol. I applied this mixture with an old brush to the undercarriage areas and the wheel hubs. It appears darker when mixed with alcohol or water but dries to a color similar to that in the photos. I applied this all over the underside of the vehicle, both front and back, and inside the wheel wells.

Once the model was dry, I used a stiff-bristled brush to knock some of the pigment off of the upper details of the hubs, to reveal the black underneath, **8**. I then



Brett painted the model in the standard three-tone scheme using Tamiya acrylics.



After weathering the rims with pigments, Brett scrubbed them with a stiff brush to remove the excess. A light dry-brushing of gray on the rims simulates the steel underneath.

To simulate lighter dust, Brett lightly brushed MMP No. 5 sand weathering pigment over the flat surfaces of the model.

used a bit of Vallejo black gray on a stiff brush to dry-brush the high details. The effect on the model is similar to the photo.

Next, I added MMP sand No. 5 with about 90 percent alcohol and painted this mixture on with a soft brush to areas such as the bumpers, the upper treads of the tires, and the sides of the vehicle, **9**. I applied this gently so I wouldn't rub off the base coat of paint. It appears almost transparent. I let this dry for a few minutes and watched the sand color start to appear as the alcohol evaporated.

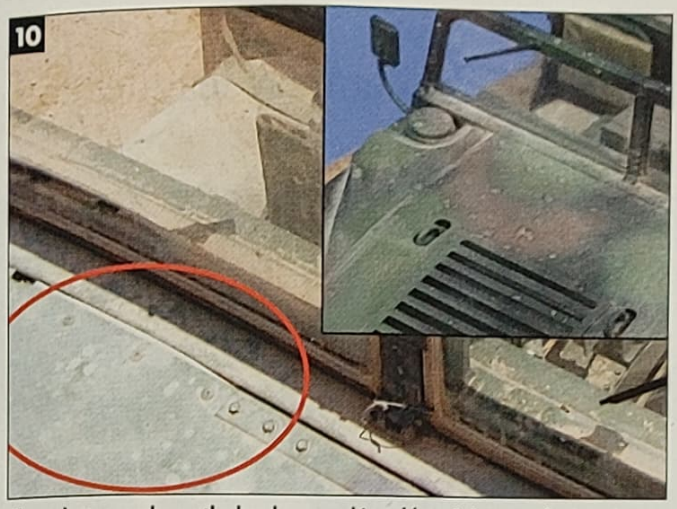
I used dry MMP sand No. 5 with a flat brush and scrubbed some of the pigment on various surfaces. I used several colors including sand No. 5 and MIG light rust, and a little MMP No. 6 medium earth and MMP No. 14 North African sand to get different effects. I brushed all of these on sparingly using an old No. 0 or No. 00 sable brush to get the pigment into the creases and crevices of the vehicle. I used a wider ¼" to ½" brush for the larger surface areas.

For a splattered effect, I mixed the MMP sand No. 5 with about 90 percent alcohol. I loaded a soft brush with the mixture, pulled the bristles back with my finger, and flicked them on the hood of the Hummer. The result was a splattered effect, similar to the actual vehicle, **10**.

The gravel, sand, and dirt filling the back of the bed is made from MMP sand No. 5, some fine model-railroad ballast, and a few larger rocks – all mixed with alcohol. I also added some brass-rod pieces that look like empty cartridge casings, **11**.

Conclusion

This was a fun model to build, and it allowed me to use photos of an actual vehicle to duplicate the weathering and combat effects of the vehicle. Using the MMP and MIG pigments was also an



The splatter marks on the hood were achieved by mixing weathering pigments and rubbing alcohol and flicking the bristles of a soaked paintbrush onto the model.

Brett added dirt and sand to the rear bed of the model and included small bits of brass wire to simulate spent shell casings. This Humvee has obviously seen combat.

Although it's a simple conversion, Brett's M998 captures the essence of vehicles currently operating in Iraq and Afghanistan.

enjoyable learning experience. I would encourage anyone to surf the net for a good series of photos of an actual vehicle and use those as primary references to duplicate weathering effects.

I'd like to thank Don Busack, Monte Claussen, and the Prime Portal website for the photos of the Camp Warhorse Humvee in Iraq. Visit them at http://www.primeportal.net. **FSM**

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Showcase

A Schneider Cup fantasy league

Jacob Russell created his racer with a 1948-49 Caudron-Renault CR 714 Sea Cyclone. It's painted in Gunze metallic gold, Tamiya flat black, and Testors glosscoat.

What if you took the flowing beauty of a late Schneider Trophy racer and transported it to the dawn of the jet age? That was the premise of the 1949 Schneider Trophy Race group project, a joint effort between the Northwest Scale Modelers and IPMS/Seattle. The idea was to have some fun by putting aside the references, forgetting about accuracy, and simply using some structured imagination.

The groups conjured up this scenario: A renewed Schneider race over Scotland's Firth of Forth.

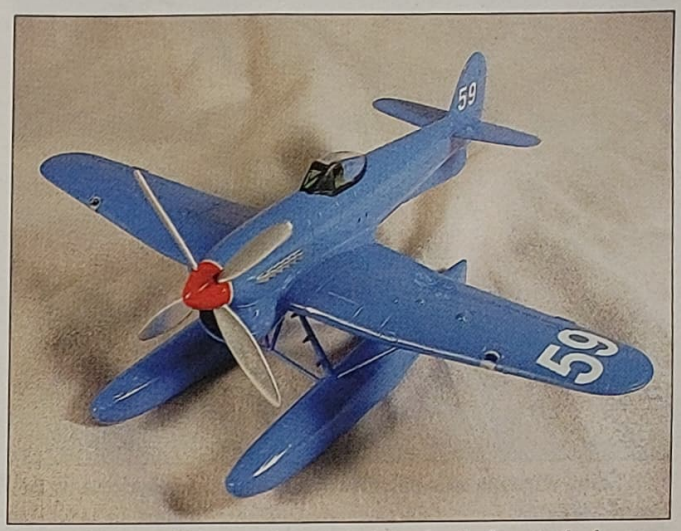
The rules were kept as simple as possible. The scale was fixed at 1/72 for the widest range of possibilities, lowest cost, and most-rapid construction. Concepts were limited to late 1940s or earlier technology, unique race numbers were assigned, many countries were ficticiously represented, and the final result had to appear both air- and sea-worthy.

Once the word spread, there was a run on kits in the Seattle area that had float-donor possibilities, old Frog kits became precious commodities, and forgotten Airfix kits once again saw daylight. Projected entries were greatly exceeded when 60 fantasy Schneider racers of various designs and shapes appeared at the show.

If your local model club is in a rut, maybe an off-the-wall project is just what the group needs to inject a little excitement and incite imaginations.

By Tim Nelson
Photos by Tim Nelson and Stephen Tontoni

Mike Millette's Pioneer Hawker Sea Fury salutes Canada. He added Twin Otter floats and Shinden propeller.



Carl Kietzke entered his Australian-inspired Hawker Typhoon in the famous sea race.

Tim Nelson went bananas! He honored "Miss Chiquita" with his High Planes P-51H kit.

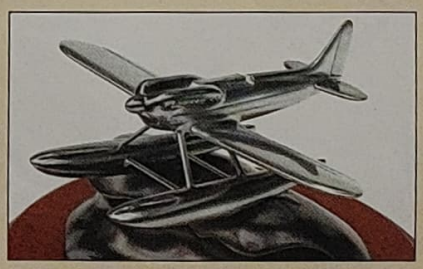
Mike Millette built a French-sponsored Dornier Do 335ZJ from Matchbox and named it "Liberte."

About the Schneider Trophy Races

The Schneider Trophy race was one of aviation's premier events between 1913 and 1931. The global contest, established by the wealthy French aviation enthusiast Jacques Schneider, was intended to promote the development of commercial "hydro-aeroplanes" via racing; it led to dramatic competition among the major aircraft producers such as Deperdussin, Savoia, Curtiss, Macchi, and Supermarine.

The race consisted of 547 yards on the sea, then a 150-mile triangular route in the air. In later years, the aircraft were expected to sit in the water for six hours prior to flight to test the durability of the floats, and then had to fly with the weight of the water they may have taken on.

The United States and Italy both came close to permanently retiring the Schneider Trophy, by nearly reaching the agreed-upon criterion of winning any three out of five successive races. But it was the British who finally pulled it off when they were the only country prepared for the 1931 race after wins in 1927 and 1929.

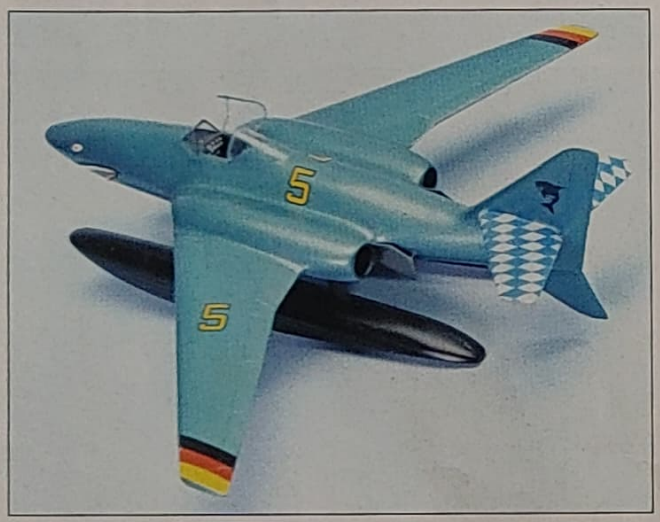


The retro-looking trophy was commissioned specifically for this project. The design is based on the old Air Lines Supermarine S.6B kit.

The Schneider races brought about many valuable advances in aerodynamics and speed. It would only be a few years after the final race before the technologies that arose from this elite pastime were applied to World War II fighters.

Scott Kruize also stopped in Ireland to pick up his Hawker Hurricane for the race.

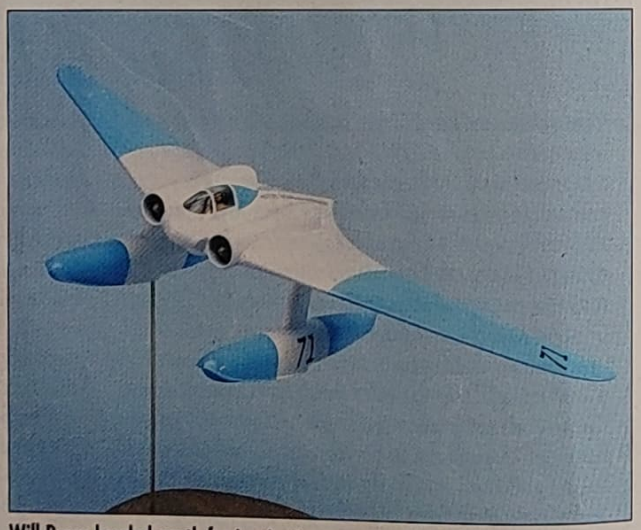
Doug Girling turned a Frog Hornet kit into the Canadian "Blackfly" by adding resin floats and custom decals.



Mike Millette found himself in Germany converting Planet's Me 262 Racer for the fictitious 1949 Schneider Trophy.

Andrew Bertshi devised this ICM Yak-9 "Sea Hawk" from Hungary with He 51 floats, a Spitfire Mk.IX prop, Typhoon canopy, and custom decals.

Ken Murphey represented "the few and the proud" in the race with a USMC F4U Corsair.



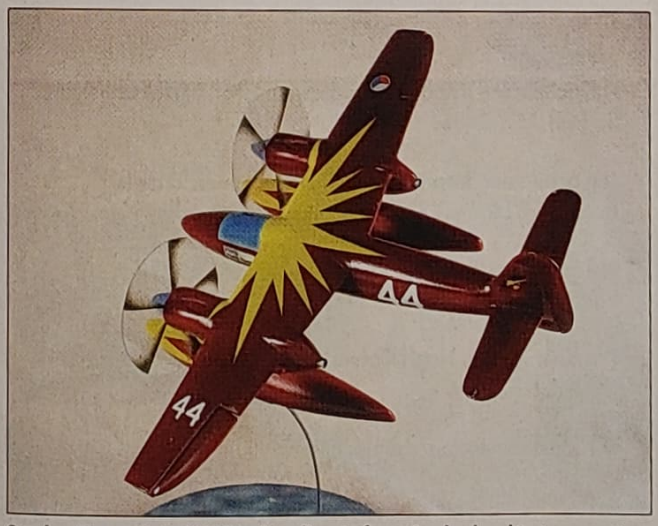
Will Perry headed south for inspiration to create this Argentinian entry from a Pioneer kit.

1949 brought the dawn of the Cold War, so Tim Nelson decided East Germany should enter his Revell Germany Focke Wulf "SeeFlitzer" Marx 1.

Jim Schubert's entry combined efforts of the U.S. Navy and the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force to modify an Aoshima Kawanishi E15K Shiun.

Doug Girling used Special Model's F2G-2 and Matchbox Twin Otter floats to create his entry named "In Like Flynn."

Scott Kruize turned to Finland to inspire his Revell "Water Buffalo." His Buffalo swims on Airfix Ar 196A floats.



Stephen Tontoni's Ta 154 Moskito flew in from Czechoslovakia to compete.

Tim Nelson converted an Academy Spitfire Mk.XIV to create his Supermarine S.49 "Lady Lucy."

Stephen Tontoni went from Czechoslovakia to Israel to pick up the streamlined Grumman F8F-2 Bearcat.

Doug Girling used PM Model's Go 229 as a base for his unique Instituto Aerotecnico IAe-28.

Carl Kietzke brought a Boeing XF8B-1, representing New Zealand's entry.

Dan Carey modified a P-80 to create the Lockheed Sea Star.

Dan Carey found his inspiration in Australia and brought in this kangaroo-wearing DeHavilland "Sea Mosquito."

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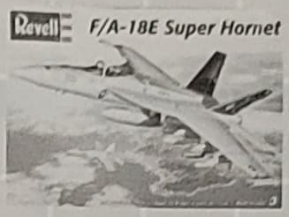

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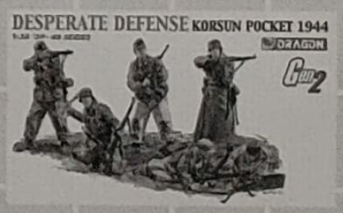

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Stretching
MONOGRAM'S GIANT HUEY

Converting a classic to a test chopper

By Kirk Williams

I work at the Redstone Technical Test Center (RTTC) in Alabama, where I frequently help test new systems bound for use in U.S. Army aircraft and vehicles. A system I recently tested was the Stabilized Electro-optical Airborne Instrumentation Platform (SEAIP), or what we nicknamed "Fatboy" because it weighs a bit more than it was supposed to, and because of its plump shape! It's carried on a weapons pylon on a UH-1H "Huey" for testing.

I wanted to make a presentation model to show the system as a whole to the various project offices we support. I needed a large model that could easily be seen by small groups, but I also needed something I could finish quickly for an upcoming trade conference. I chose the classic 1/24 scale Revell-Monogram Huey Gunship. At almost 20" long, this model was ideal, and the kit already had the weapons pylon needed to mount the Fatboy.

However, the kit represents a B model Huey with the short cabin, and I needed an H model with the long cabin. The rest of the airframes of the two versions are similar enough that I decided I could get there from here. The biggest task would be "stretching" the cabin.

Modifying the cabin was mostly a matter of lengthening of the outboard blisters to extend around the engine and transmission housing, rather than end in front of it. The resulting enlargement doesn't alter the overall length of the Huey's fuselage.

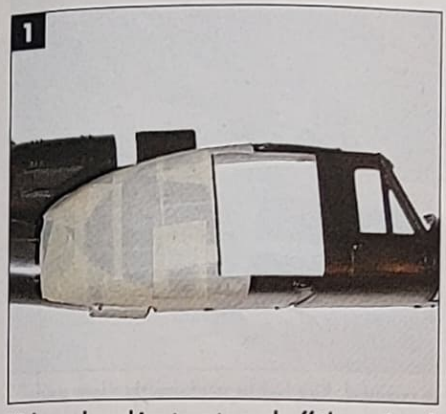
On the model, it would involve relocating the back end of the cabin blister further aft and fairing it into the tail boom. This would result in having to rebuild the roof and belly, create larger doors, make a new floor, and extend the landing skids.

Beyond the conversion, I also scratchbuilt a test equipment rack for the interior and fashioned the "Fatboy" sensor unit.

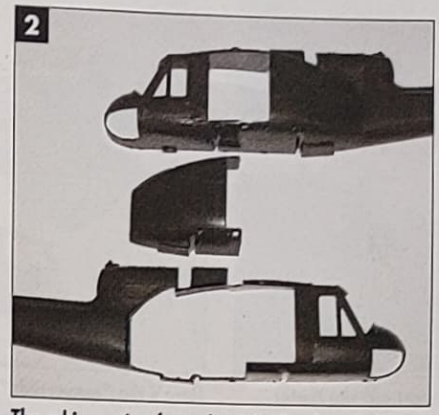
"Stretching" the fuselage

The first step was to outline the section I wanted to cut with masking tape, **1**, and to perform the surgery with a razor saw, **2**. Once I had the section of fuselage that I needed cut out, I used a half-round file to shape the aft end to fit over the kit's tailboom, **3**. Once the piece fit, I glued it in position and filled the gaps with a combination of auto-body filler and super glue, **4**. The missing sections of the cabin roof and floor were replaced with .050" styrene sheet and smoothed out with auto-body filler.

At this point, I dry-fitted some of the interior walls and the extra little door the H-model has in front of the large sliding doors and added the transmission, **5**. I added a few details to the kit transmission: thin solder to simulate piping and a piece of 3⁄16" aluminum tubing for the drive shaft. With the exception of the air filter, I decided not to use the kit engine since it

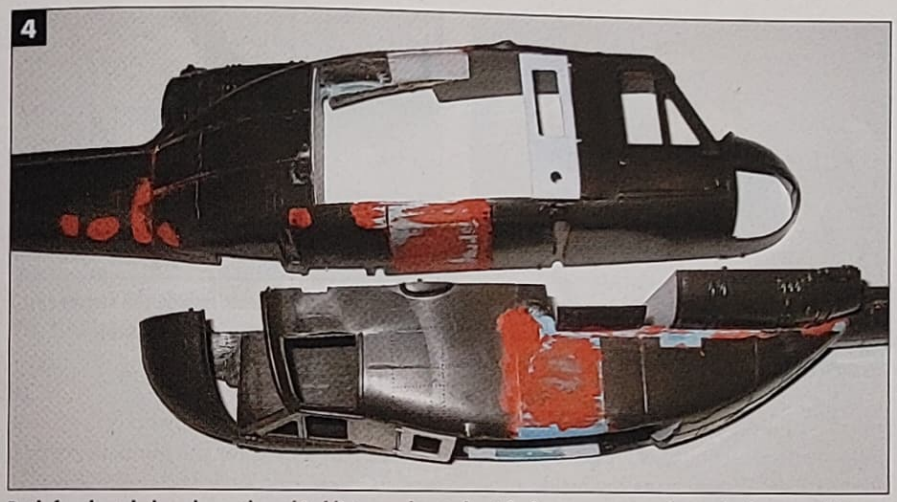


Kirk used masking tape to mark off the section of the cabin that needed to be cut away.



The cabin section from the right fuselage half has been cut away. The left half awaits its turn.

Kirk used a large half-round file to shape the rear end of the cabin "blister" around the tail boom.



Both fuselage halves have the cabin blisters relocated, with sheet styrene and auto-body putty filling the gaps. The "jump door" has been added to the right side.

Kirk test-fitted the engine transmission and ceiling panels to the left fuselage half. He ended up making the top of the fuselage half removeable.

wouldn't be visible once the model was complete.

The landing skids were longer on the H model. I cut the middle out of the kit skids, leaving about a ¼" stubs on either end. I shaved the stubs with a No. 11 blade until the diameter was small enough to fit inside a section of 7/32" brass tubing, **6**, and then the tubing was attached with super glue.

Take it from the top

Since I wanted to show off the whole SEAIP system and not just the external Fatboy unit, I decided to make the model a "convertible" with an easily removable top. So, after gluing the model together, I once again turned to my trusty razor saw and went to work. The removeable top allows people to view inside the cabin, but it caused a few structural problems, mainly twisting of the fuselage. I solved that by pouring a layer of quick-setting, two-part urethane resin into the floor of the model, then covered that with Plastruct's .050" square-tile-patterned sheet styrene. I also had to beef up the front window frame with .020" sheet styrene, **7**. The whole cabin interior was airbrushed flat black.

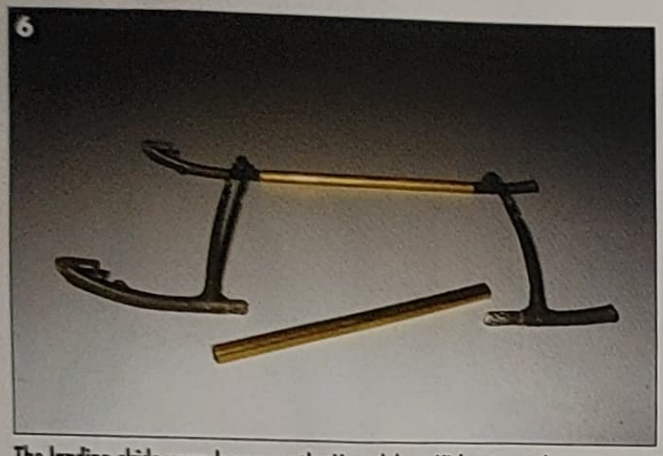
While I was working on the top deck, I added the Huey's characteristic "toilet bowl" infrared emissions supressor on the exhaust. I made it from a piece of ½" PVC pipe cut at an angle. It's much too thick for the scale, so I scraped and sanded the inside edge until it looked right. Painting the inside flat black makes it nearly impossible to see where the wall tapers from thick to thin.

Doors and windows

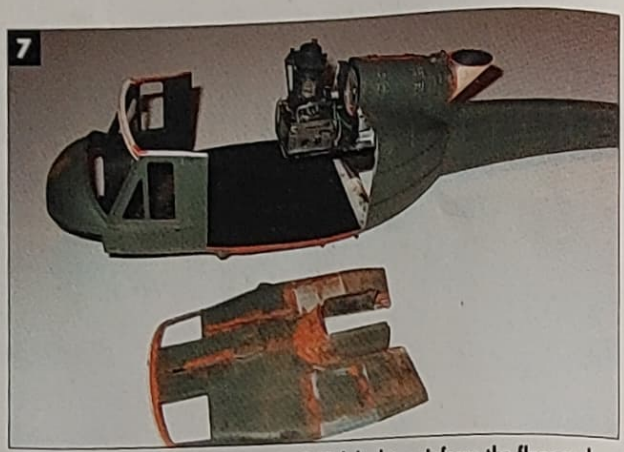
I had to make new doors for the model since the stretched cabin has a longer door opening. To get the curve of the new doors to match the curve of the fuselage, I taped a sheet of .020" styrene to the cabin opening. I super glued two more layers of .020" sheet to the one taped to the fuselage. Laminating thin sheets together this way is an easy way to achieve simple curves without the fuss of trying to heat-form the sheet.

Once the super glue set, I trimmed the doors to size, then drew the locations of the windows with a pencil on the insides. After cutting the window through all three sheets of the laminate, I drew a 1/16"-wide border on all sides, cut through the two inner laminations, leaving a rabbet on the outside lamination that will hold the window. All the replacement windows were cut from a clear-plastic CD case and dipped in Future for improved clarity.

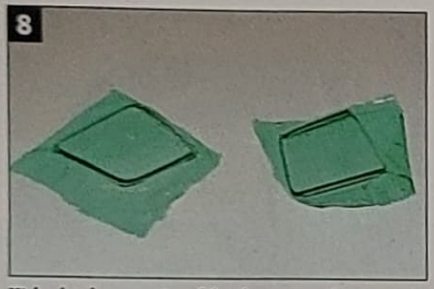
In the past, I've tried tinting overhead windows with green transparent paint, but my results have been uneven and blotchy. This time, I tinted the windows by gluing pieces of Reynolds green-tinted plastic wrap to the kit's clear pieces with Future floor polish. The polish is sticky enough to make the plastic wrap bond with the plastic parts, **8**. An additional dip in Future made the parts look as though they were molded in tinted plastic. Once dry, the plastic wrap was trimmed to size, and I dry-fitted all the cockpit windows. They didn't fit well, especially the windows at the pilot's feet, so I had to trim most of the openings with a No. 11 blade. After the model was painted, I attached all the Future-coated windows with super glue.



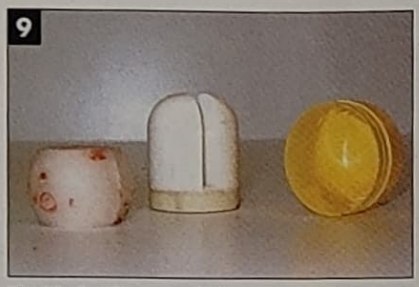
The landing skids were longer on the H model, so Kirk cut out the center sections and replaced them with brass tubing.



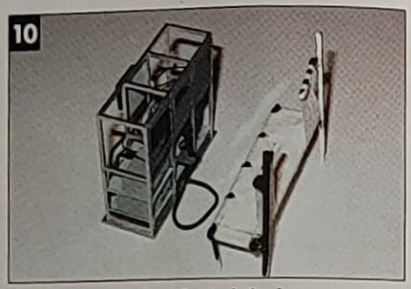
Here's the "convertible" top removed. Kirk had to reinforce the floor and the forward window bow with styrene to keep the fuselage assembly from twisting. Note the "toilet bowl" infrared suppressor added to the exhaust.



Kirk glued green-tinted food wrap to the overhead windows with Future floor polish.



The "Fatboy" was made from a toy container (right), a resin casting of it (center), and a "widget" from a can of Guiness stout!



The additions to the cabin include the sensor test rack (left) and the test-crew bench seat.

Future helps keep super glue from "frosting" clear parts.

Building a "Fatboy"

The Fatboy sensor turret and its associated control and test equipment inside the cabin of the helicopter were next. The Fatboy actually turned out to be easy because I found all the items I needed lying around my house, **9**. A little yellow tube that held a miniature toy inside a German chocolate egg made an ideal mold. By pouring resin into the tube and letting it harden, I produced a perfect cylinder with a nicely rounded end. I then milled a slot through the cylinder's end, leaving me a perfect Fatboy body.

The part I used for the gimbal system was an interesting find: It came to me as I was sharing a Guiness stout with some friends. I cut open the Guinness can to see what the famous rattling "widget" inside looked like. With some minor modification, it was perfect for the Fatboy's gimbal. I shaved off the widget's ends and added a piece of 1/16" brass tubing to use as a pivot. Assembled, the model Fatboy moves and rotates just like the real thing.

The electronics rack, monitors, computers, and the joystick that controls the Fatboy were next. The electronics rack was made by constructing a box framework using Plastruct .060" square styrene rod bonded with super glue and painted gray, **10**. Computers, which I made from pieces of the dashboard from a '50 Ford truck model found in my parts drawer, populate the racks.

The monitors were made by cutting squares out of that clear acrylic CD case. I fashioned a monitor frame from .020" sheet, which was glued to the one side of the acrylic. The back of the clear monitor screen was painted black, and the frames painted in light "computer" gray. I made the electronic cable by twisting three strands of black thread together.

The joystick that controls the Fatboy

More on "Fatboy"

Development and fielding of new missiles for the U.S. Army requires extensive testing of the sensors involved. The Redstone Technical Test Center developed a large stabilized test bed, the Stabilized Electro-optical Airborne Instrumentation Platform (SEAIP), or "Fatboy." Mounted with its associated test equipment in a UH-1H helicopter, Fatboy serves as a mobile laboratory for sensor test and evaluation. Sensors may be flown over a variety of targets and terrain while data is collected to evaluate the systems.

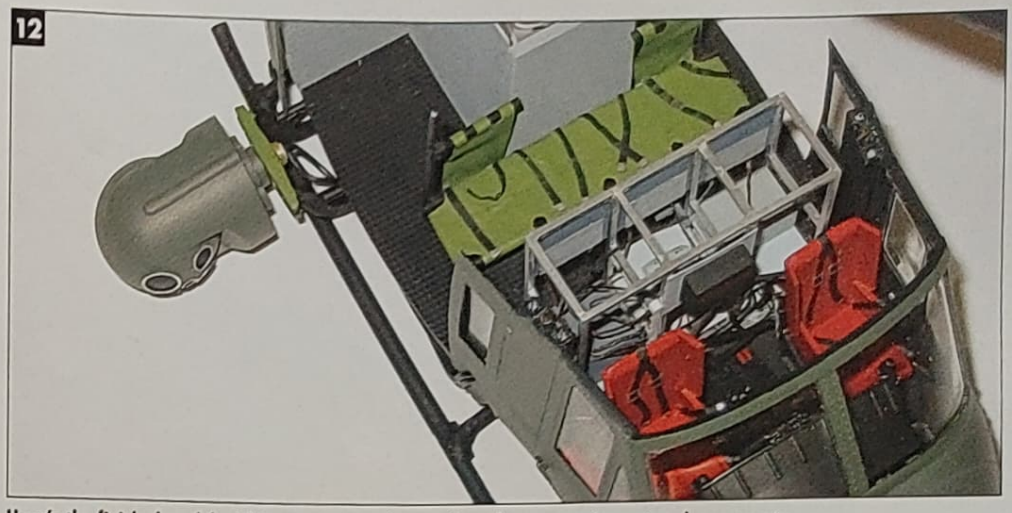
An early test flight of the UH-1H features a white "Fatboy" turret. Bob Pozzo photo.

The large volume of the Fatboy is capable of containing prototype ("brassboard") systems that are not yet packaged for flight testing by conventional methods.

Airborne sensor testing requires a stable platform, and the UH-1 helicopter is ideal for this mission, being both reliable and relatively inexpensive to operate. The Fatboy has been in use since 1998, and has shaved one to two years off of the time required to get sensor systems into service.

– Tim Ricks

Here's an easy fire extinguisher: A muffler from an old truck kit and bits of plastic and solder do the trick.



Here's the finished model with its top removed, revealing the test equipment and crew seats.

The homemade display stand poses the "Fatboy" Huey in flight.

was made from a bit of sprue, and connected with thin black wire from the hardware store. I painted the rack silver.

The cockpit is straight-out-of-the-box with the exception of a fire extinguisher that I fashioned from a muffler from the Ford truck kit, **11**. I also added seat harnesses from index cards. I painted the structural frames interior green, seat frames, and instrument panel flat black. The seats are red to match our test bird.

Styrene tubing (3/32") makes the rear seat frame, which I covered with crumpled computer paper. The paper simulates the tight-weave cloth, and crumpling it up a bit makes it look more worn and realistic. The seatbelts were cut from index cards as well. I painted the seat frames and harnesses flat black, and the "cloth" interior green, **12**.

Finishing

I tried to match the exterior color by borrowing a removed panel and comparing it with model paints. The closest I could come was Model Master RAF dark green, but after I painted the model, it looked too light. Next time I'll pick a darker color. The main and tail rotors were airbrushed flat black and weathered with silver on the leading edges.

A coat of Testor Acryl clear flat evens out the finish. I decided not to use decals; what came in the kit wasn't right for our test chopper, and I didn't feel that markings would be missed by my audience.

The last details were wire cutters made from 20-gauge aluminum sheet and a GPS antenna made from a bit of sprue attached to the upper wire cutter. The finishing touch for the model was a display stand made by Tim Ricks, who developed the SEAIP program for RTTC.

The project not only produced the model I needed to illustrate the system, but gave me scratchbuilding and problem-solving experience. It also showed me that I didn't always have to go to the hobby shop to find the shapes I needed. An open mind (and an open Guinness) allowed me to find my "Fatboy" right here at home.

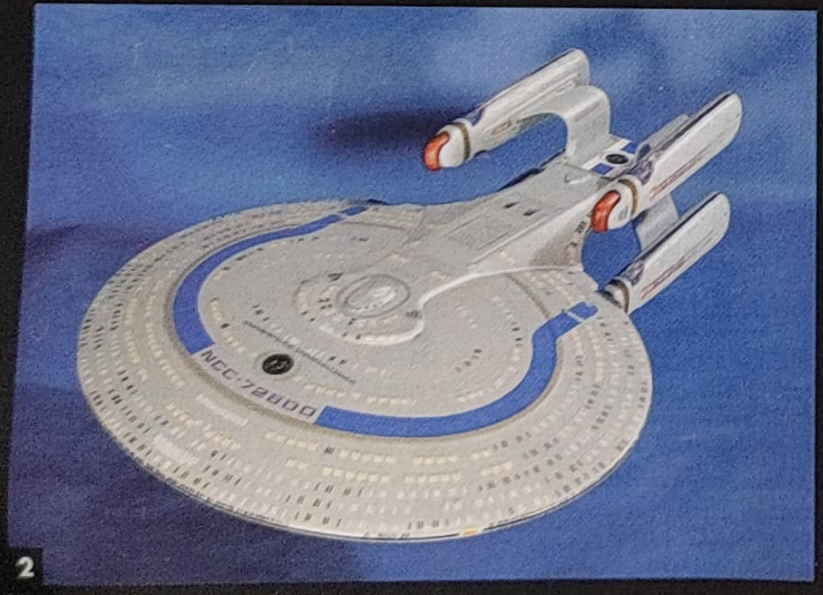
FSM

SOURCES

Styrene shapes Plastruct, 626-912-7016 www.plastruct.com
Brass stock K&S Engineering, 773-586-8503, www.ksmetals.com
Casting resin (CR-600) Micro-Mark, 800-225-1066, www.micromark.com

Reader Gallery

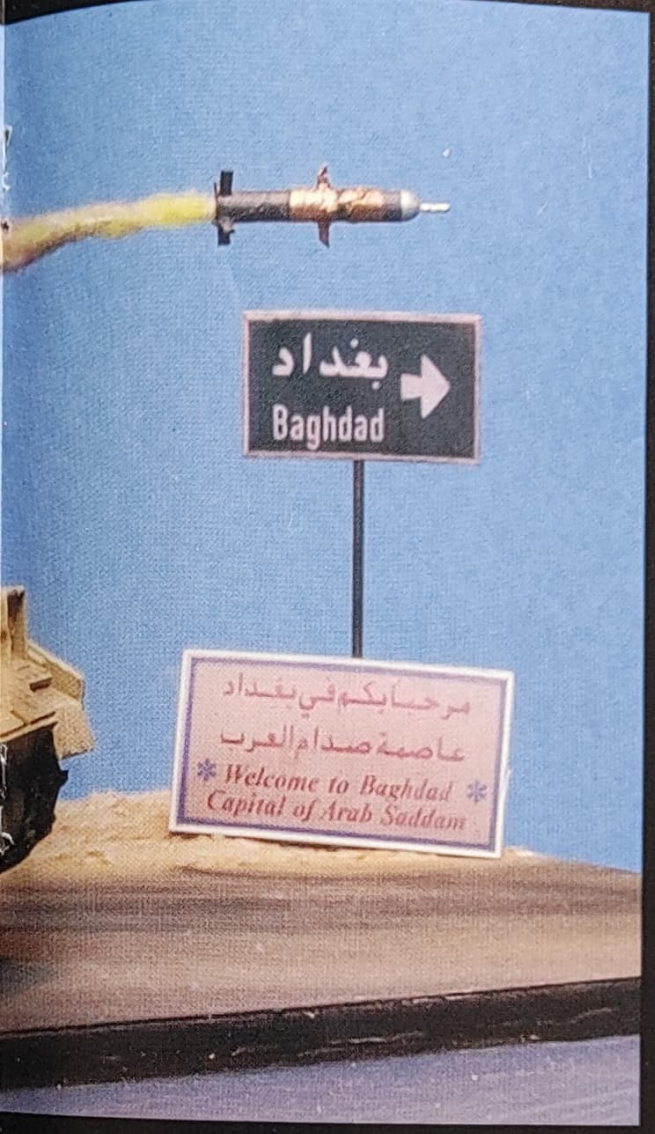
1



2

1 Paul Fernandez
Harrow, England
Paul wanted to add action to his 1/72 scale Revell Bradley, so he decided to launch a TOW missile made from sprue and shaped down with sand paper. TOW missiles don't usually have that much smoke, explained Paul, but he needed to hide the wire.

2 John Payne
Oakland, New Jersey
John formed this USS *Grand Alliance* with AMT/Ertl's 1/1400 scale "Star Trek: Next Generation" *Enterprise D* and a scratchbuilt hull. It's dressed in a combination of kit, JT Graphics, and homemade decals.



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4

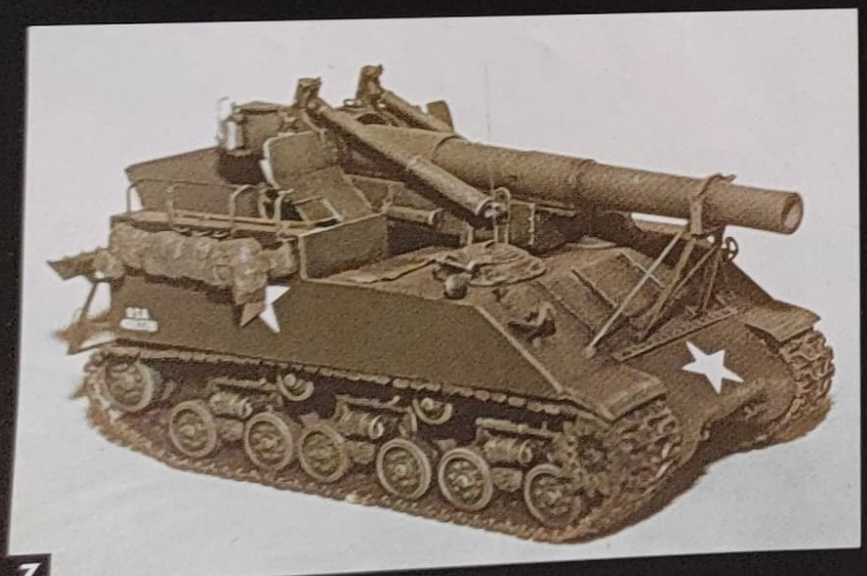
5

3 Thomas Muggli
Valley Stream, New York
Built straight from the box, this 1/72 scale Italeri Eurocopter Super Puma is dressed for the Swiss Air Force with UNHCR markings from Kosovo, 1996. It's finished with Model Master Acryl paints.

4 Tom Altobello
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada
Tom added Aber photoetched parts and scratchbuilt cables to Tamiya's Panzer III Ausf L. The figure was modified to include a resin head.

5 Bill Love
Albemarle, North Carolina
Bill converted Trumpeter's 1/32 scale F4U-1D to an F4U-1A. He detailed the cockpit and engine, scratchbuilt metal exhausts, and added treaded tires and canopy framework.

6



7

6 Patrick Lavorgna
Madison, Connecticut
Patrick's 1/9 scale Italeri Army Harley Davidson WLA 45 motorcycle was brush painted with flats and glosses and weathered with pastels. Motorcycles like Patrick's carried coded messages back and forth from front-line units during World War II. Photo by Joe Fay.

7 G.D. Whitefield
Springfield, Oregon
The lower hull and suspension on this M43 Howitzer Motor Carriage MC was built with a Tamiya M4A3E8 and the gun is from Verlinden, but the remainder of the model is scratchbuilt.

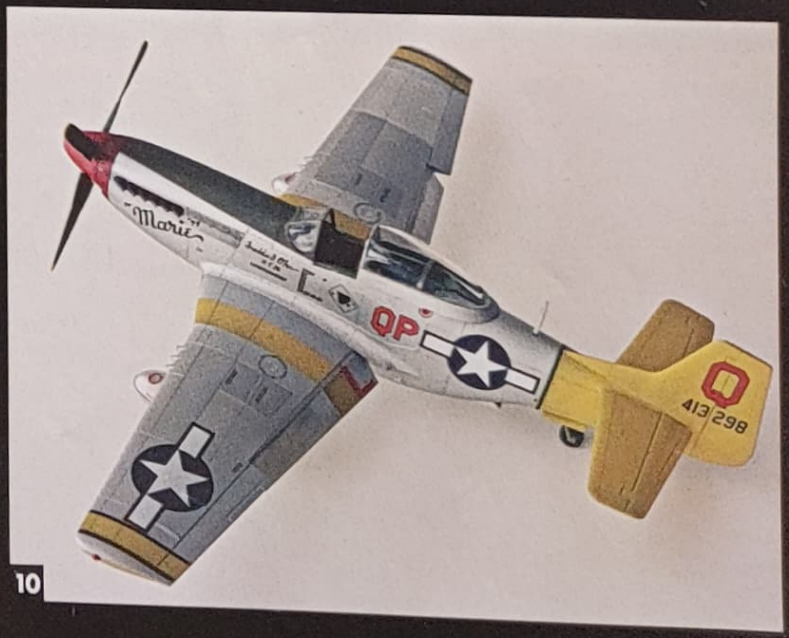
8

9

8 Lawrence Cohen
Wappingers Falls, New York
Lawrence landed his 1/144 scale Revell 767 on a hand-crafted black walnut base. He turned to Liveries Unlimited and Aerocolours Graphics for decals and Corroguard panels.

9 Robert P. Morrison
Hickory, North Carolina
Robert completed Tamiya's 1/48 scale Spitfire Mk. Vb with photoetched seat belts, drilled-out cannons, and AeroMaster decals.

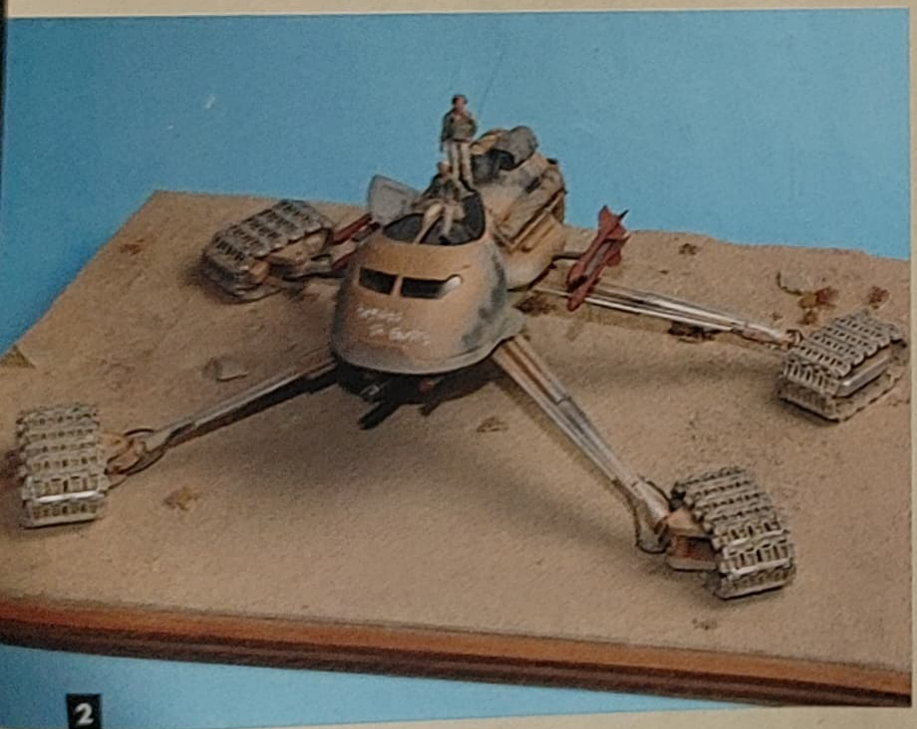
10 David Reyes
Carpentersville, Illinois
David's 1/48 scale Tamiya Mustang depicts the aircraft of USAAF ace Capt. Freddie Ohr. David replaced the cockpit with Black Box detail sets and painted it with Testor aluminum Metalizer.



10

Show Gallery | MosquitoCon

1



2

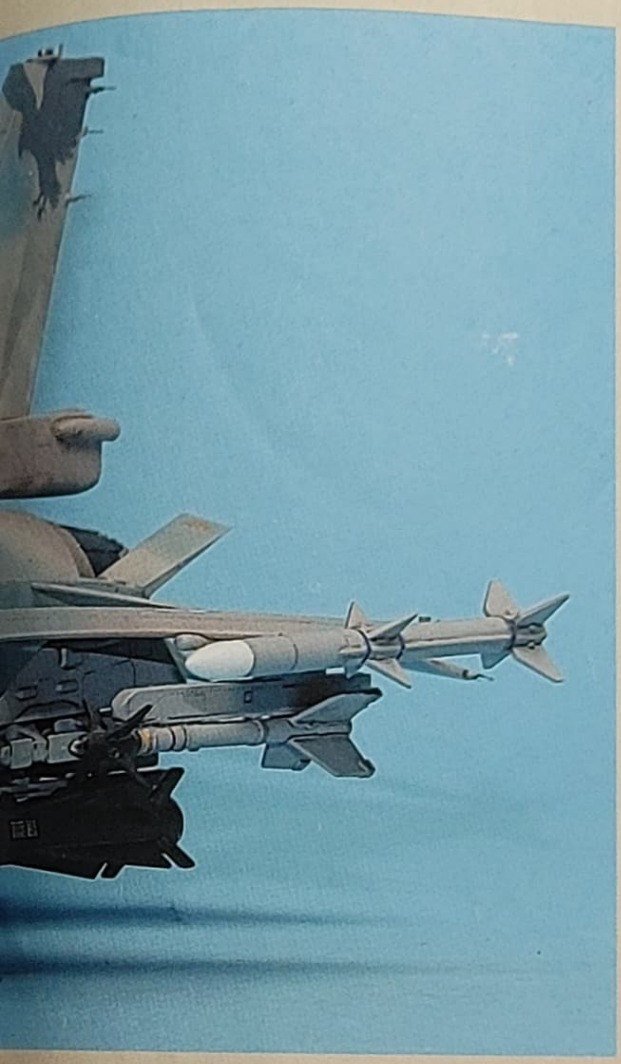
FSM's Associate Editor Jeff Herne ventured back to his home turf of New Jersey in April 2005 to photograph his former club's annual event. Hosted by IPMS/New Jersey, MosquitoCon boasts one of the largest turnouts for a single-day model contest on the East Coast. The 2006 show will be held at the Wayne Police Athletic League building April 8. Please visit www.njipms.org for show information.
FSM

1 Kevin Fedoronko
Wilmington, Delaware
Kevin updated Hasegawa's 1/48 scale F-16D Block 52+ of the Hellenic Air Force with a Black Box cockpit, Aires exhaust, and Cutting Edge detail parts. Kevin added the avionics spine and scratchbuilt details in the wheel wells.

2 John Cunningham
Allentown, Pennsylvania
Is it a tank? A carnival ride with weapons? No, this is John's scratchbuilt 1/48 scale "Sand Skipper," a purely fictional vehicle.

New Jersey 2005

By Jeff Herne



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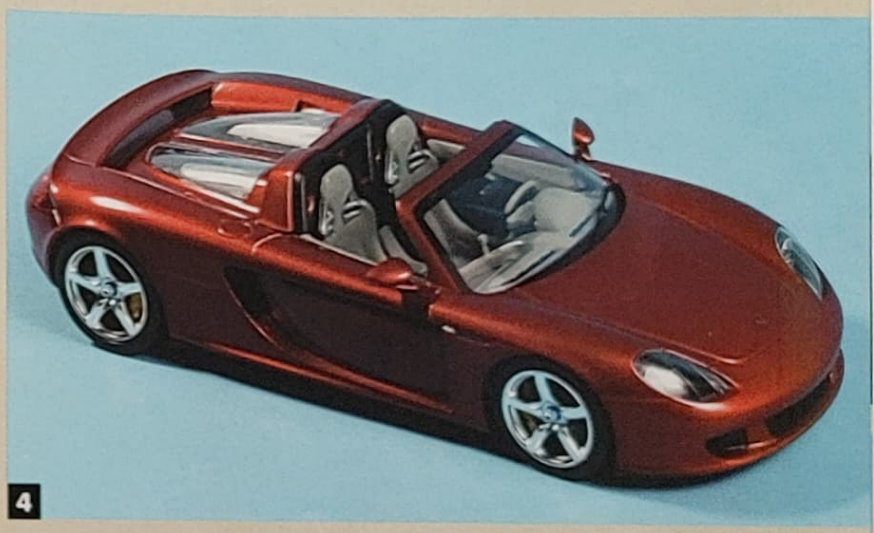

4

3 Dan Spera
Nutley, New Jersey
Dan modeled Hasegawa's 1/48 scale F-104A Starfighter with a Cutting Edge cockpit, scratchbuilt canopy details, and Victory Productions decals. This aircraft was used by the FAA for sonic-boom tests over Oklahoma in 1964.

4 Brian Schwartz
Bellmawr, New Jersey
Brian's love of Porsches prompted him to build the Tamiya 1/24 scale Carrera GT. He painted the model with Tamiya mica-red spray paint.

5 Mike O'Connor
West Long Branch, New Jersey
The Curtiss A-12 Shrike was the Army Air Corps' first monoplane attack aircraft. It entered service in the early 1930s but was obsolete by 1941. Mike built the Czech Model 1/48 scale kit straight from the box.

5

6

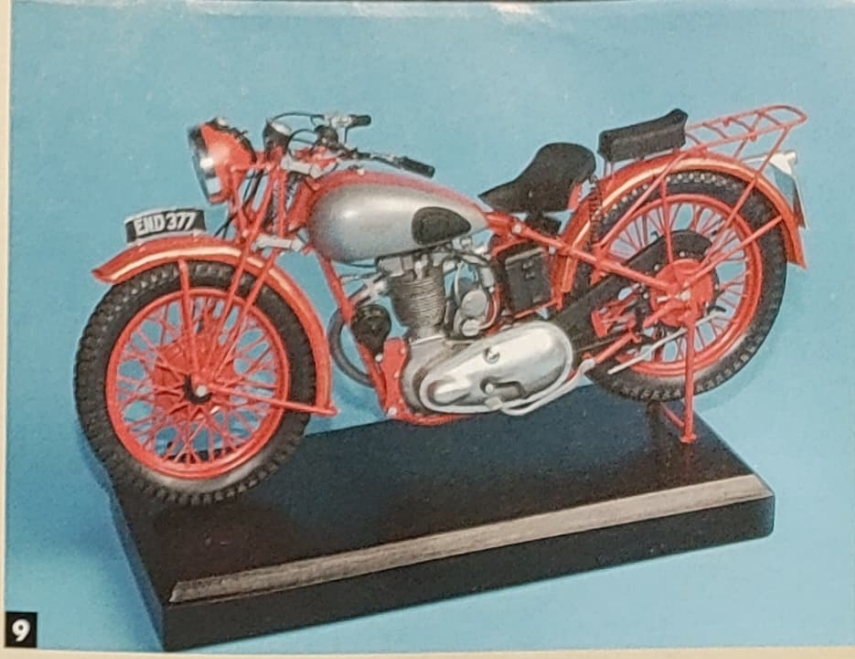
7

8

6 Bill Schmidt
Ansonia, Connecticut.
Bill's 1/35 scale Tamiya U.S. Army deuce-and-a-half received all sorts of extras, including a Verlinden engine set, Tank Workshop wheels, and Eduard photoetched brass parts.

7 Len Russo
Fairview, New Jersey
Len built and painted Andrea Miniature's 90mm 15th-century German Gothic knight and warhorse using a combination of acrylics and oils. He polished each piece of armor to a high sheen.

8 Richard Rohr
Highland Park, New York
Richard used Tiger Model's 1/35 scale conversion kit to model this variant of the SdKfz 9 FAMO. Richard also added Tamiya photoetched details, tow chains, straps for the helmets, and slings for the rifles.



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10

11

9 Robert Karnas
Rahway, New Jersey
Robert "civilianized" his 1/9 scale Triumph 3HW motorcycle from the Esci/Ertl military kit. The 350cc 3HW enjoyed some success post-war as a cruising and racing bike.

10 Adam Profit
Bronx, New York
This Syrian T-55 represents a tank from the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Adam started with Tamiya's 1/35 scale T-55 and added Model Kasten tracks, Eduard photoetched details, and MV Lenses.

11 Greg Tarris
Allendale, New Jersey
The South Goodwin Lightship was lost in a storm off the coast of England near Kent in 1954. Greg modified the Eastern Express 1/110 scale kit with scratchbuilt parts and aftermarket fittings, including anchors and chains, scratchbuilt masts, and brass porthole covers.

RESURRECTING a classic S.E.5a

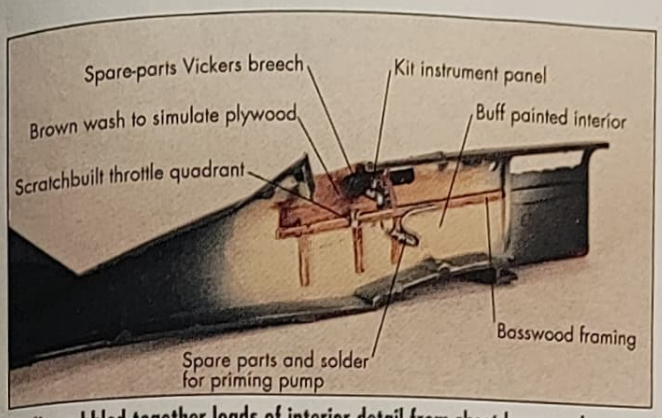
Improving the old Monogram/Aurora World War I fighter

By James Green

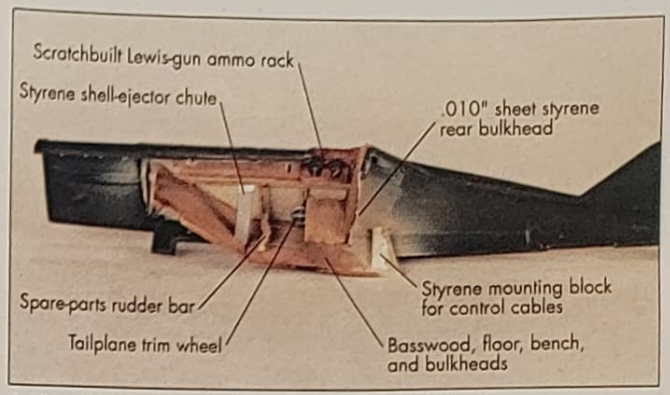
An old modeling axiom is "there's always a better kit coming." But if you believe that, you might never build a model as you wait for the ultimate to come along. If you have a stash of unbuilt kits, eventually most of them will be superceded by a newer kit with better quality – and a higher price.

I like to look at the older kits as modeling challenges. An old kit isn't necessarily unbuildable or worthless. Take Monogram's 1979-issue 1/48 scale S.E.5a World War I biplane, for example. It's a revision of the even-older Aurora kit.

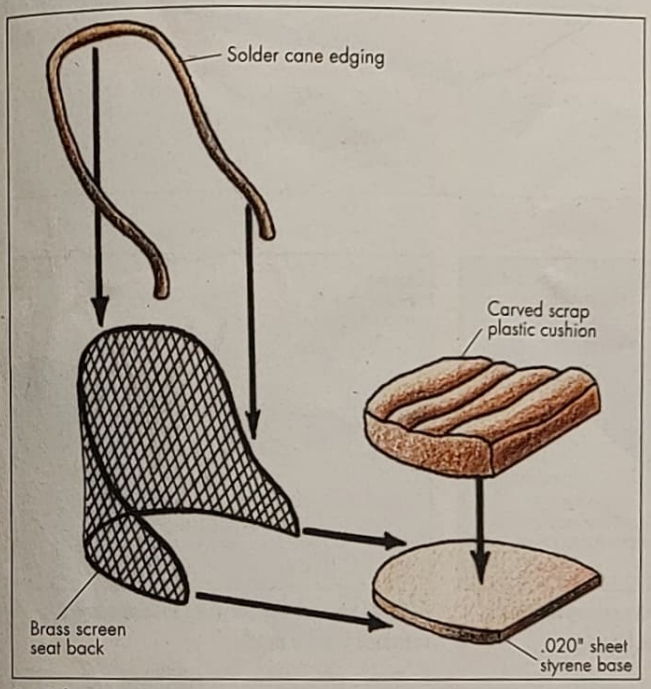
With enough care and attention, a fantastic model can be built from a kit that debuted nearly 50 years ago. Jim's much-improved Monogram/Aurora S.E.5a is a perfect example.



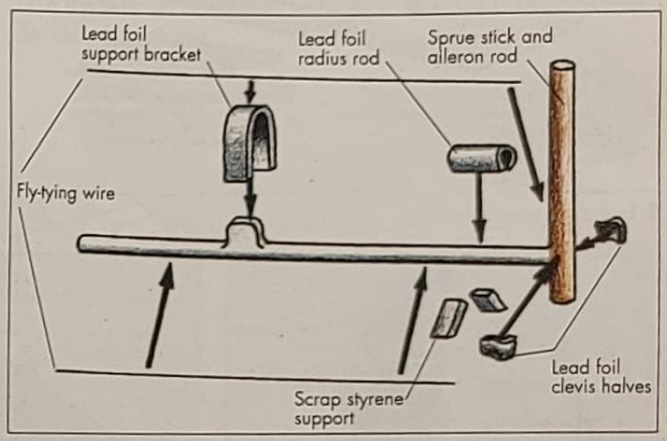
1. Jim cobbled together loads of interior detail from sheet basswood, styrene, wire, and solder.


Scratchbuilt Lewis-gun ammo rack
Styrene shell-ejector chute
.010" sheet styrene rear bulkhead
Styrene mounting block for control cables
Spare-parts rudder bar
Tailplane trim wheel
Basswood, floor, bench, and bulkheads

2. The right side shows the basswood floor and bulkheads.



3. Wicker seat



4. Control column

Monogram's tooling replaced Aurora's inaccurate surface features, which included raised decal locators common in the 1950s, with crisp, petite, and reasonably correct details. With the exception of the too-thick fin and rudder, the kit's shape and outline are fairly accurate too. However, the cockpit has only a bulky seat, instrument panel, control column, and pilot figure. With a little creativity, craftsmanship, and a few spare parts, the old S.E.5a can become a real attention-getter!

Cockpit detailing

With nothing more than incomplete side-and top-view cutaway drawing from *Jane's All the World's Aircraft - 1918* to go by, I faked most of the interior detail starting with stringers, bulkheads, a floorboard, and a seat bench. Since most WWI aircraft were built from wood, I chose basswood for realism. The rear bulkhead is .010" sheet styrene so I could later blend it with the cockpit coaming and headrest.

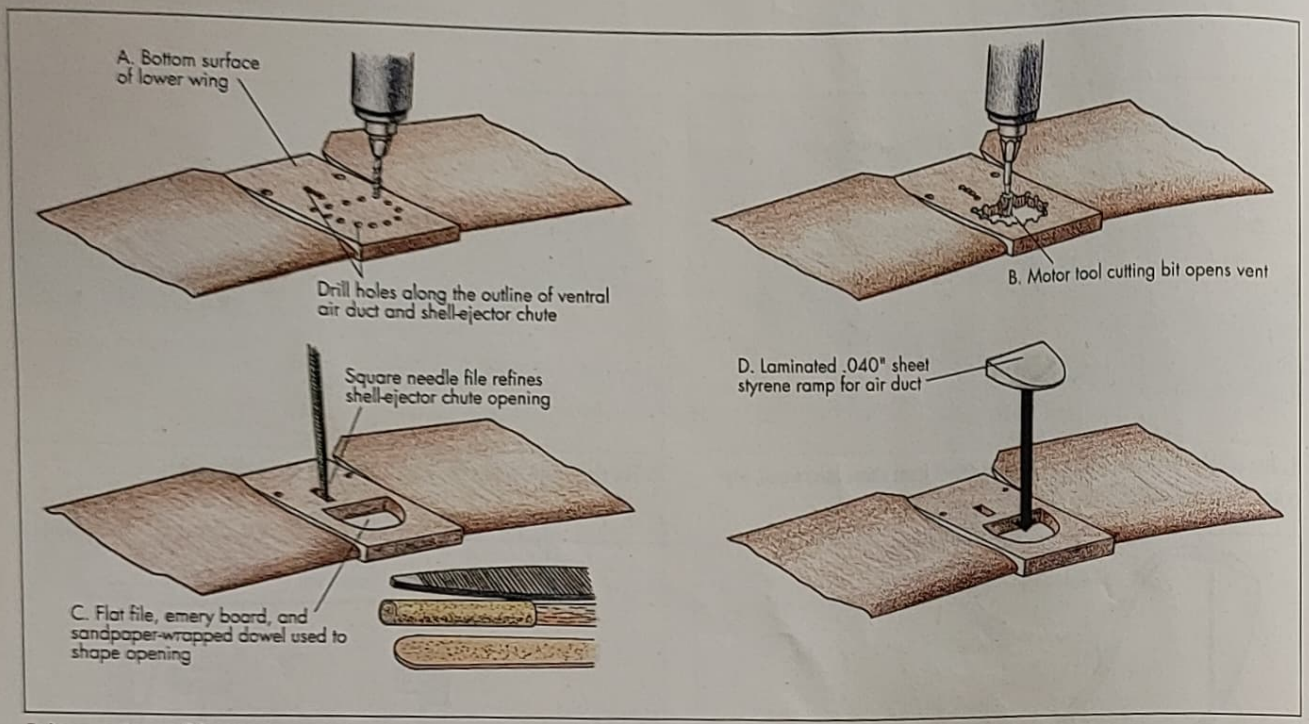
I added the stringers first with superglue, then sprayed the interior buff. To determine the shapes of the floor, bulkheads, and seat bench, I fashioned note card templates first, then transferred the final shapes to the basswood sheet. I temporarily placed the shapes in the right fuselage half with tape and adjusted the basswood bits with a knife and sandpaper so the left fuselage half would fit without interference.

I then applied the bulkheads, bench, and floorboard to the right fuselage with super glue. Next, I stained the basswood parts and the inside of the plywood-covered upper fuselage area with streaky brown water color paint, leaving the fabric-covered areas in the buff applied earlier. This gives an authentic look to the interior. A shot of Testor Dullcote lacquer was then applied to seal the water color.

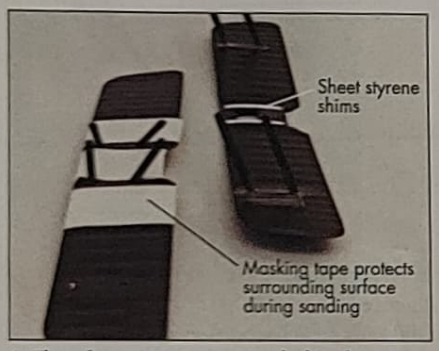
More details in the cockpit include a notch cut in the instrument panel for the breech end of the machine gun. An HO-scale tool kit provided a saw handle that looked like the cocking lever. I placed instrument decals on the panel. I scratchbuilt the priming pump from a spare landing gear strut and fine solder and a throttle quadrant from scrap plastic and photoetched lever knobs, **1**. On the right is a pocket for two Lewis-gun ammo drums, a tailplane trim wheel, and a shell-ejector chute mounted in front of the rudder bar, **2**.

The seat was made from photoetched brass screen shaped by bending it around the kit's seat. The seat cushion is a chunk of sheet styrene, and the edging to the mesh is fine solder, **3**. I made the control column from stretched sprue and the linkage rod from scrap and fly-tying wire, **4**. After anchoring all the items in place with super glue, I touched them up with clear flat to hide the glue.

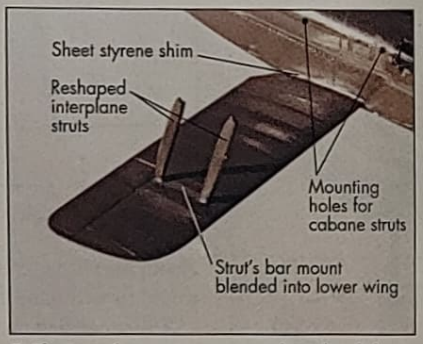
After closing the fuselage halves, I blended my rear cockpit bulkhead with the top of the fuselage. I used sandpaper wrapped around dowels of various diameters to clean up the seams. Sanding dust that fell into the cockpit was blasted out with the airbrush.


A. Bottom surface of lower wing
Drill holes along the outline of ventral air duct and shell-ejector chute
B. Motor tool cutting bit opens vent
Square needle file refines shell-ejector chute opening
C. Flat file, emery board, and sandpaper-wrapped dowel used to shape opening
D. Laminated .040" sheet styrene ramp for air duct

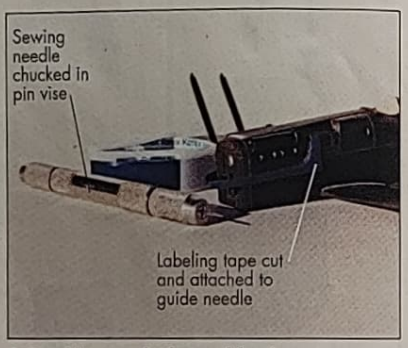
5. Lower wing modifications



6. The cabane struts were attached to the upper wing, and the interplane struts to the lower.


Sheet styrene shim
Reshaped interplane struts
Mounting holes for cabane struts
Strut's bar mount blended into lower wing

7. The interplane struts were reshaped and the lower wing attached to the fuselage.



8. Panel lines on the forward fuselage were rescribed using a needle.

I left off the cowl gun and cylinder covers for now. Before adding the front of the radiator, I glued the prop shaft in place, then backed the carburetor opening with sheet styrene. I glued the tail skid into the slot in the fuselage, filling the slightly long slot with scrap styrene.

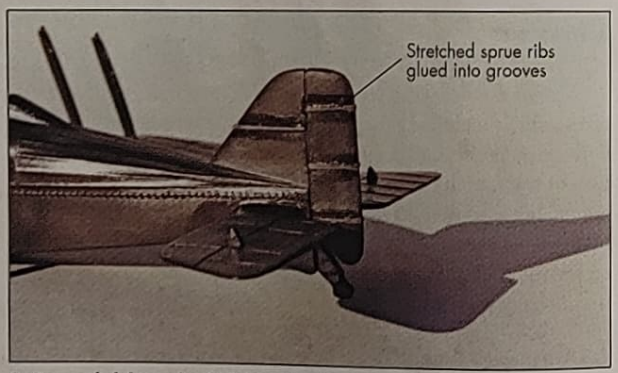
Wing things

The lower wing also serves as the floor bottom of the fuselage, and it required work. I needed a hemispherical opening for the ventral air-duct ramp. The drawing shows how I cut open the duct and the shell-ejector chute, **5**. The lower wing didn't fit the opening in the fuselage, so I added .040" plastic shims to the upper part of the wing's midsection, followed by a round of sanding and test fitting.

I figured the cabane struts would work better if glued into the slots in the upper wing first, rather than mounted to the fuselage as suggested by the instructions, **6**. This way I could more easily fill and sand the strut/wing joints.

Similarly, I refined the shape of the interplane struts and glued them into the lower wing, then cleaned up around the slots, **7**. With that work done, I glued the lower wing to the fuselage.

To keep the long exhaust pipes out of the way while I worked on the fuselage, I separated them from the cylinder covers. I also replaced the radiator cap with plastic rod and a disc of .010" styrene punched out using a Waldron punch-and-die set.

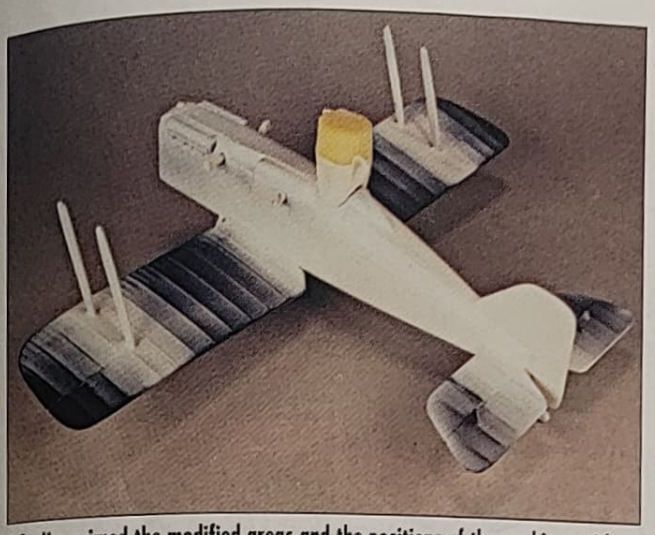


9. Jim sanded down the thick fin and rudder, then replaced the rib detail.

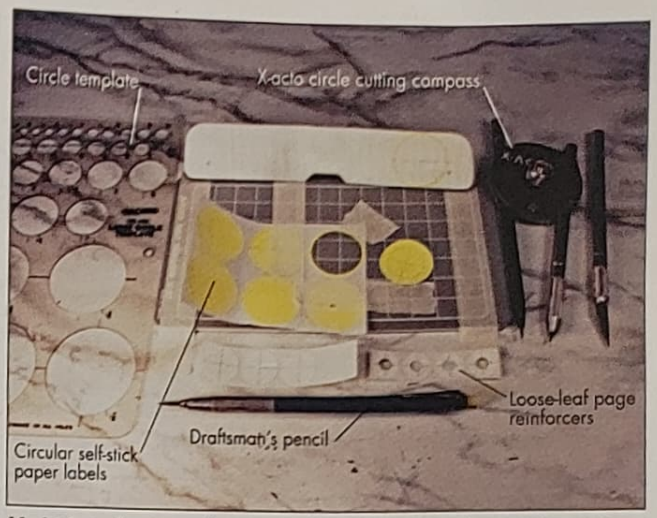
I sanded off the raised panel lines on the forward fuselage, then rescribed them using a sewing needle chucked in a pin vise, **8**. I used labeling tape as a guide for the straight lines and cut curves in the tape when needed.

I thinned down the overly thick fin and rudder but lost the raised rib detail. I replaced it by scoring lines at the rib locations, gluing pieces of stretched sprue into the grooves, and sanding them down a bit, **9**.

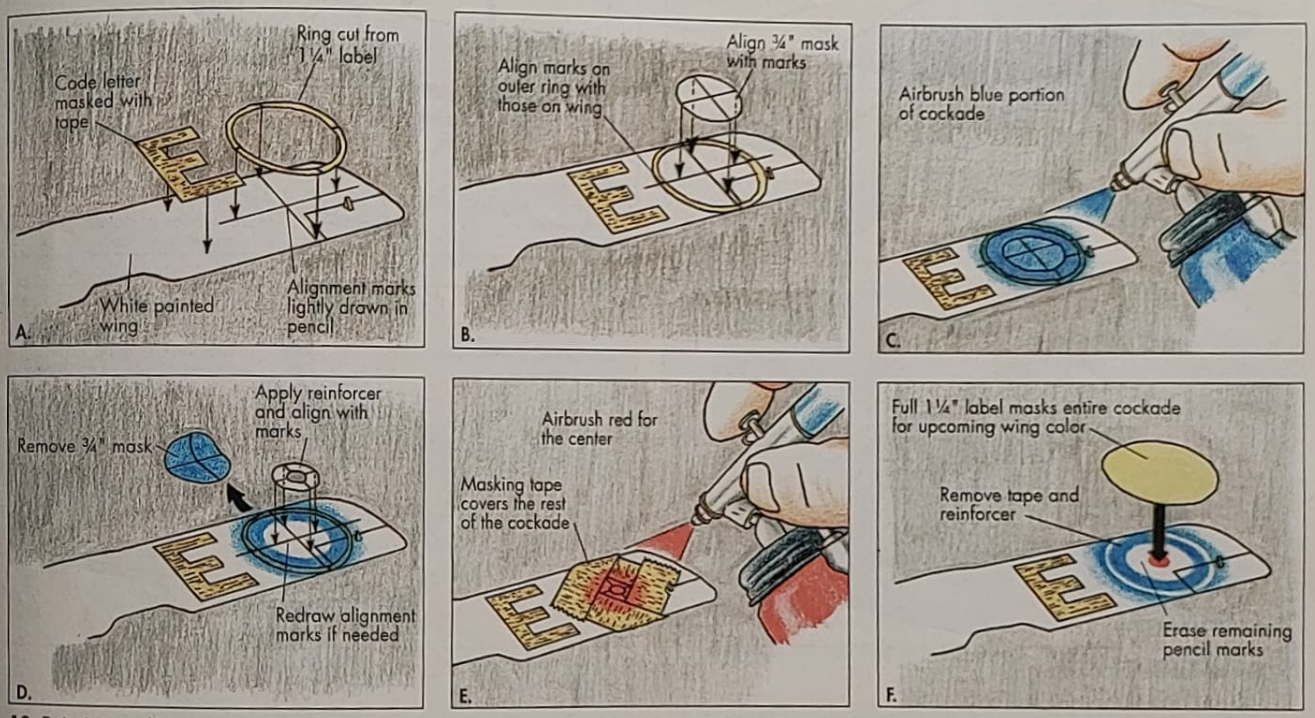
I tackled the landing gear assembly next, aligning it with



10. Jim primed the modified areas and the positions of the markings with flat white.



11. A trip to the art supply store produced the tools and materials to paint the "cockade" insignias.


Ring cut from 1¼" label
Code letter masked with tape
White painted wing
Alignment marks lightly drawn in pencil
A.
Align marks on outer ring with those on wing
Align ¾" mask with marks
B.
Airbrush blue portion of cockade
C.
Remove ¾" mask
Apply reinforcer and align with marks
Redraw alignment marks if needed
D.
Airbrush red for the center
Masking tape covers the rest of the cockade
E.
Full 1¼" label masks entire cockade for upcoming wing color
Remove tape and reinforcer
Erase remaining pencil marks
F.

12. Painting markings

strips of tape first, then anchoring all the joints with tiny drops of super glue. I removed the tape and applied just a few more drops of super glue for added strength.

With all the major subassemblies built, it was time for a thorough wet-sanding with fine sandpaper. I followed that with a coat of Testor liquid cement applied with a brush. The cement gently etched the plastic, smoothed out any fine scratches left by the sandpaper, and made it easier for paint to adhere.

Painting and marking

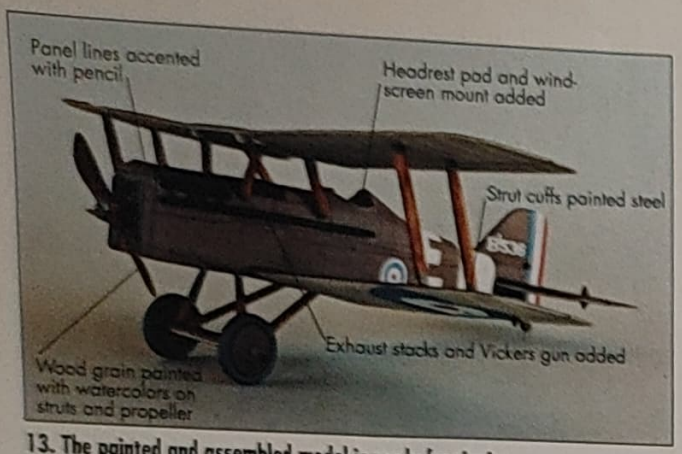
I wanted to make my S.E.5a represent a fighter from the Royal Flying Corps' 56th Pursuit Squadron, but the decals in the kit were for an American-service machine. Without aftermarket decals, I decided to paint all the markings. I started by painting the areas where the markings would go flat white, **10**.

A trip to an office-supply store yielded several items that were perfect for masking the wing cockades (roundels): all-purpose labels and loose-leaf hole-reinforcing rings, **11**. I drew centering crosshair lines on the labels and rings to help align them, **12**. I made the outer ring masks by cutting the center out of a label with a cutting blade in a compass. I also used the cutter for the smaller fuselage cockades but had to hand paint the tiny red center.

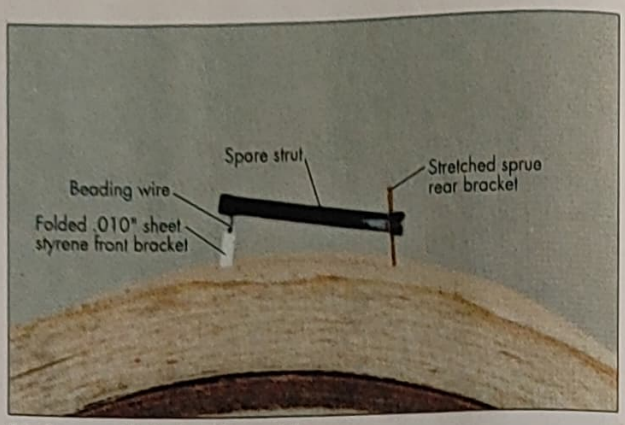
I also masked the E markings on the wing and fuselage. Since the fuselage is curved on top, I established the edges of the E masks with thin strips of tape, then filled in the middle with larger pieces of tape. The thin strips are easier to manipulate, keeping the edges straight on a curved surface.

To get the white serial number, I found matches for the size and style among dry-transfer numbering sheets (also at the office-supply store). I didn't need to look for white numbers; I used black ones on the white paint and used them as masks. Once the main color was dry, I removed the numbers with tape, revealing the white below.

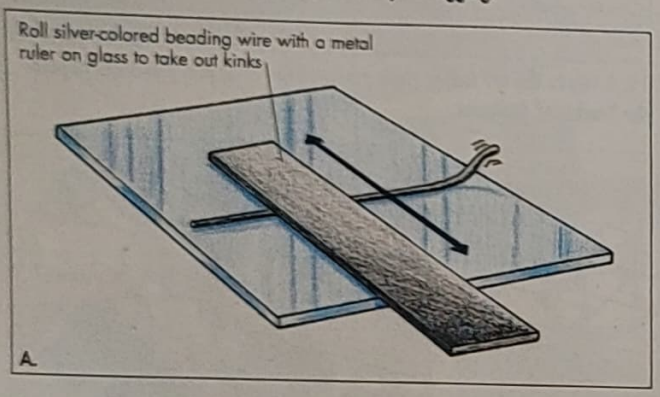
I plugged the cabane-strut mounting holes with rolled strips of tape to keep paint out. I lined the cockpit opening with masking tape, sticky-side-out, then stuck in a foam ear plug to mask the cockpit.

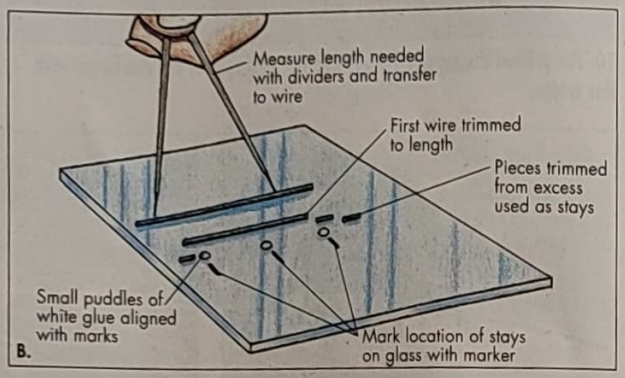

Panel lines accented with pencil
Headrest pad and windscreen mount added
Strut cuffs painted steel
Exhaust stacks and Vickers gun added
Wood grain painted with watercolors on struts and propeller

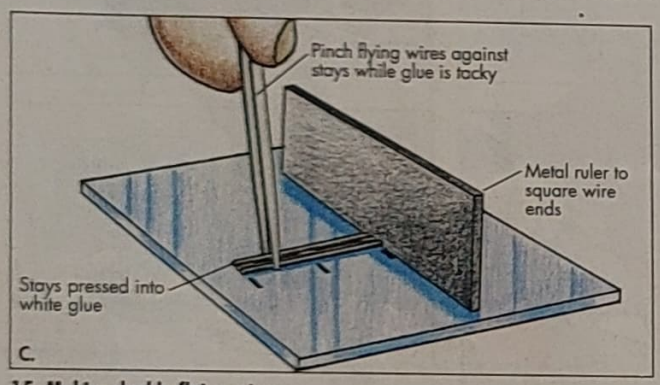
13. The painted and assembled model is ready for rigging.

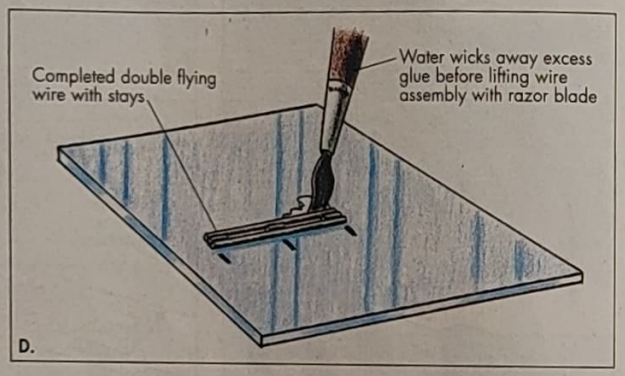


14. Jim scratchbuilt the Aldis gunsight.




Measure length needed with dividers and transfer to wire
First wire trimmed to length
Pieces trimmed from excess used as stays
Small puddles of white glue aligned with marks
Mark location of stays on glass with marker
B.





15. Making double flying wires

I painted the bottom of the craft with a 50/50 mix of Testor wood tan and flesh to represent the linen-buff color. For the topside "PC-10" khaki brown color, I added a little white to an old bottle of Pactra roof brown. The tires were painted flat black, and the outer "tread" areas were dry-brushed with Testor Euro I gray.

Once the paint was dry, I removed the masks and touched up as necessary. I painted the struts and prop wood tan, then applied steel paint to the prop hub and radiator shutters. I also used steel to simulate the strut mounting cuffs.

I drew a No. 2 pencil along all the new panel lines in the forward fuselage, followed by a stiff bristle brush to blend in the graphite a bit. At this point, I added most of the small parts. I dry-brushed brown acrylics on the struts and prop blades to simulate wood grain. A dark watercolor wash was applied to the hinge lines and recesses, **13**. All the weathering was sealed with an airbrushed coat of Dullcote. Steel, lightened with a touch of silver, was dry-brushed onto the radiator and prop hub.

Now I could add the top wing, spreading the cabane struts enough to engage their pins in the holes in the fuselage. The interplane struts were similarly adjusted into the upper wing before I applied tiny drops of super glue to the pins. Capillary action and gravity drew the super glue where it was needed. Steel paint and Dullcote helped hide excess super glue.

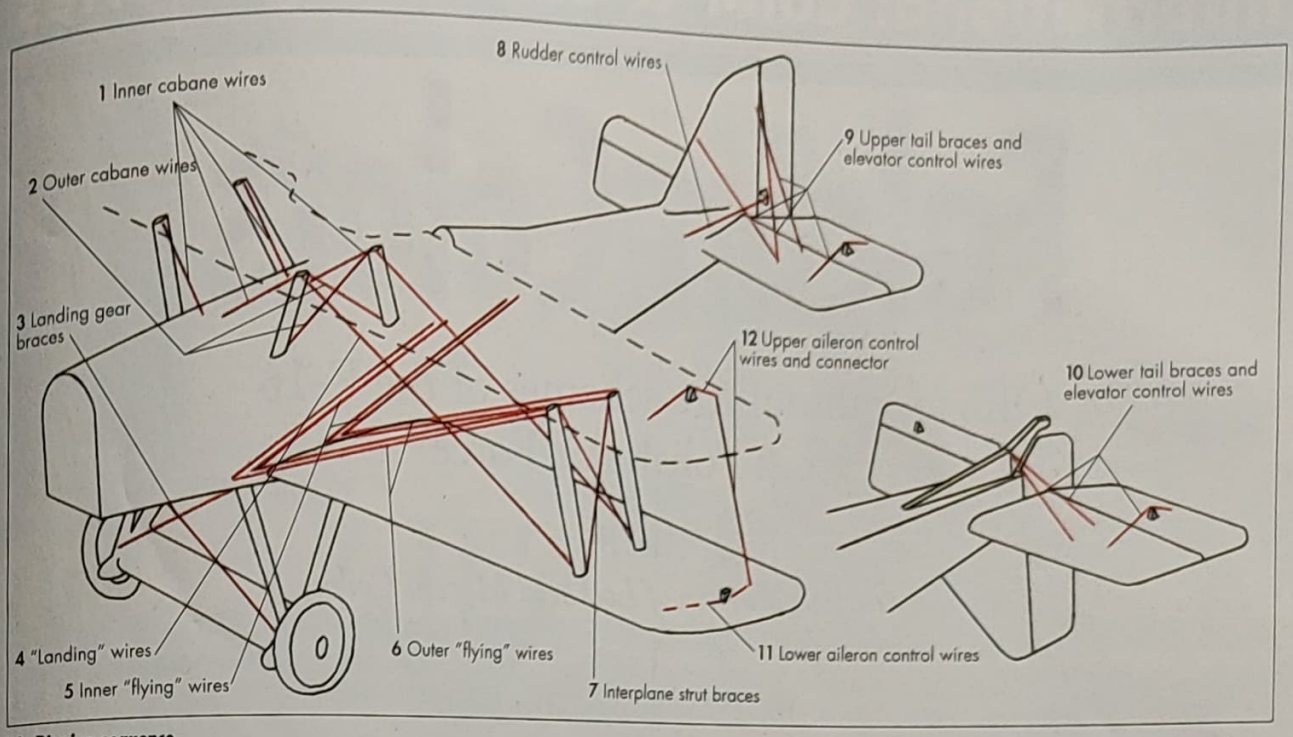
Little details were next. They include mounting the seat with spares box harness and adding an Aldis gun sight made from a spare strut, sheet styrene, and beading wire, **14**.

Rigging

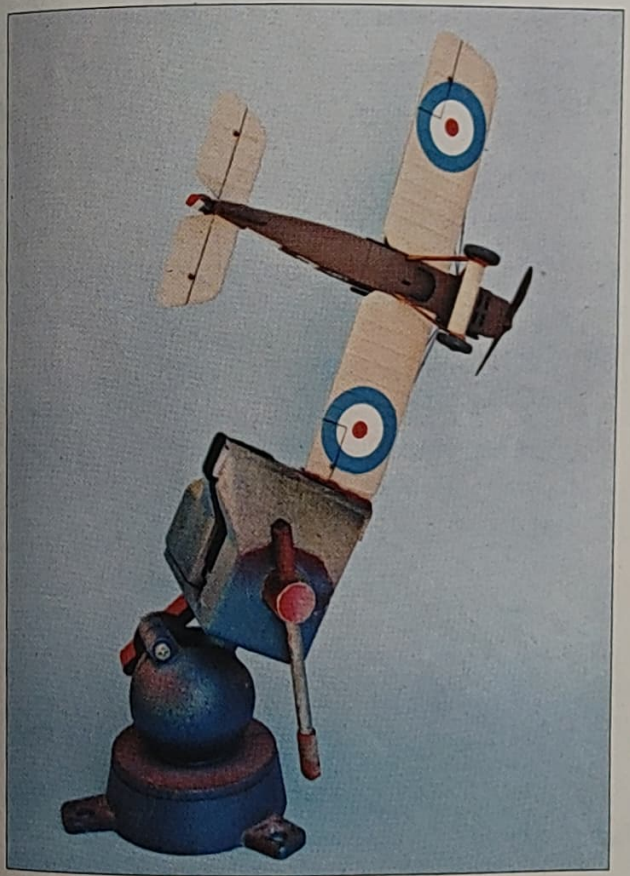
Rigging is an essential and crucial aspect to a decent biplane model. I didn't want to mar the model by drilling holes for the rigging wire, so I measured and cut the wires between the wings and attached them with tiny dabs of white glue. I used silver-colored beading wire for the flying and landing wires, and fly-tying wire for the control cables.

Drawing **15** shows how I produced the doubled flying wires. Rolling the wire between a metal ruler and glass takes any bends and kinks out of the metal. White glue has enough stickiness to hold the wires together, yet allows the sets to come free of the glass. Drawing **16** shows the rigging diagram and sequence.

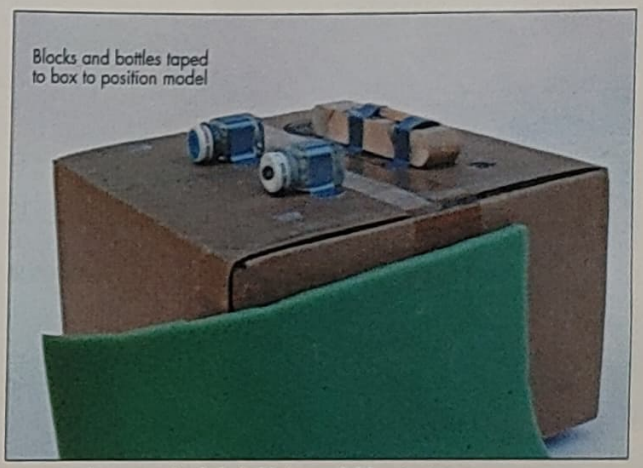
To make handling the model easier, I lined the jaws of a multi-position vise with self-adhesive felt and used it as a third hand to hold the model securely at whatever angle was required,


1 Inner cabane wires
2 Outer cabane wires
3 Landing gear braces
4 "Landing" wires
5 Inner "flying" wires
6 Outer "flying" wires
7 Interplane strut braces
8 Rudder control wires
9 Upper tail braces and elevator control wires
10 Lower tail braces and elevator control wires
11 Lower aileron control wires
12 Upper aileron control wires and connector

16. Rigging sequence



17. A cushioned multi-position vise holds the model for rigging.



18. A simple jig can also help hold the model for rigging.

17. I also taped paint bottles and wood blocks to a box as a rudimentary jig to hold the model upright, **18**, then replaced the bottles and blocks and covered the box with thin carpet padding to rest the model upside down while I rigged it.

The final touches were an application of Dullcote airbrushed over the rigging to even out the finish of the wire and hide any shiny glue. I applied drops of Glosscote to the ends of the Aldis sight with a fine paintbrush to simulate lenses and then mounted the Lewis gun to the upper wing. I added a photoetched pitot head to the right interplane strut and a windscreen cut from clear acetate. Pressing the prop onto it's shaft complete the job.

So there you have it, my personal tribute to those intrepid flyers of No. 56 Squadron who proved the S.E.5a to be a combat-worthy aircraft! **FSM**

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Fighters of World War One Andrew Kershaw, editor, Phoebus Publishing Company/BPC Publishing Ltd, London, 1976

Aces High: The Air War Over the Western Front 1914-18 Alan Clark, Copyright 1999, Barnes and Noble, Inc.

Jane's All the World's Aircraft -1918

SOURCES

Brass screen Precision Scale Model Engineering, 508-478-3148, www.psmescale.com

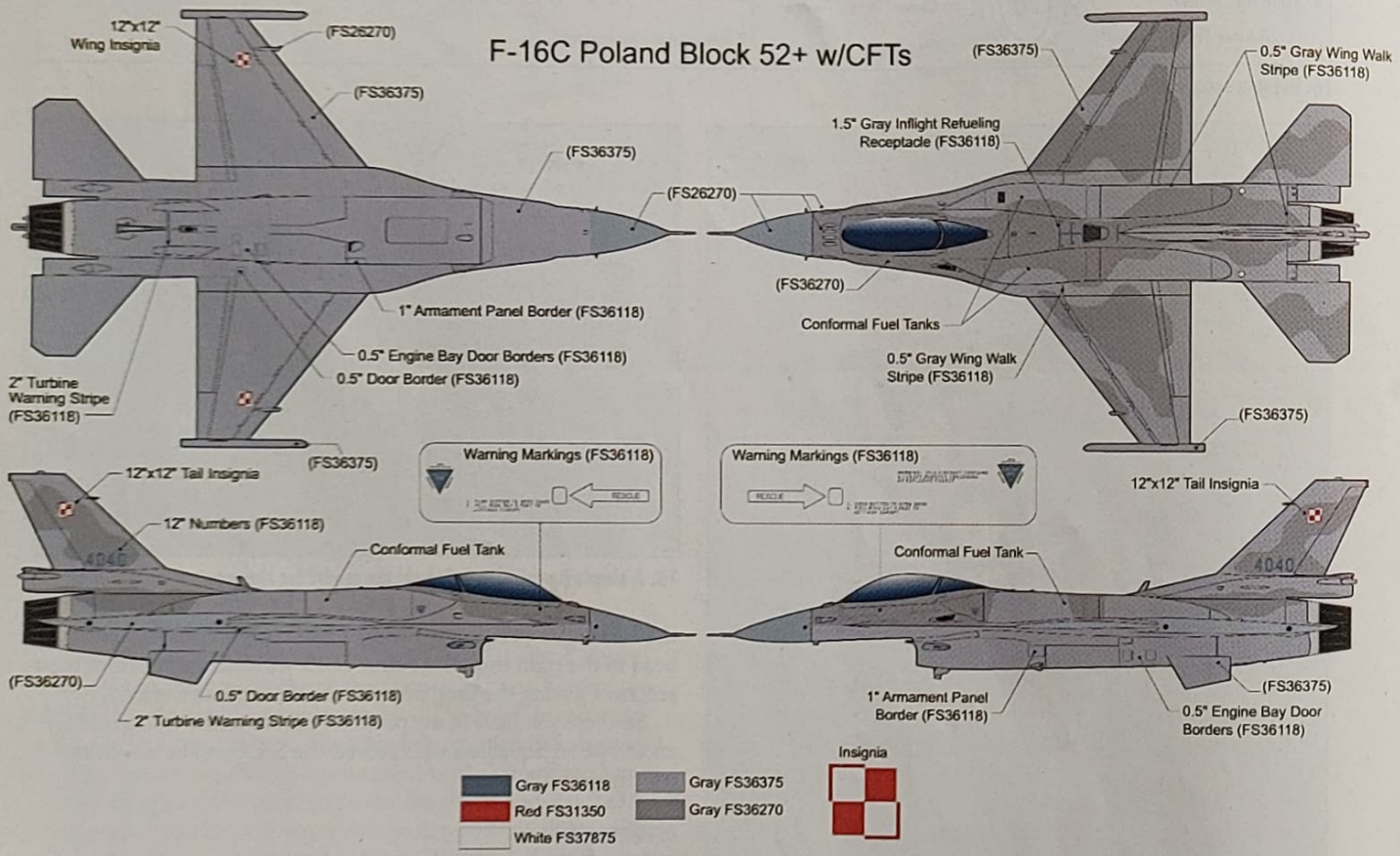
Beading wire available at most craft stores

Sheet styrene Evergreen Scale Models, 877-376-9099, www.evergreenscalemodels.com

Falcon Colors

Official camouflage schemes of the F-16 Part 2: Polish Air Force

By Paul Boyer
Illustrations courtesy of Lockheed Martin Corp.



The expansion of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) to include several former Eastern Bloc countries meant increased military equipment sales. That, in turn, meant new insignias would be applied to Lockheed Martin's F-16 Fighting Falcon. Poland joined NATO in 1999 and was first to order F-16s: 48 F-16C and D models to be in service by 2008. As many as 100 F-16s may eventually be made for Poland.

The newly built Block 52 Falcons will replace Poland's aging MiG-21 fleet. Polish F-16s could well be flying wing-to-wing with MiG-29 Fulcrums – the aircraft most often compared to the F-16's war-fighting capabilities.

The color scheme applied to Poland's F-16C/Ds is a "disruptive" pattern of light ghost gray FS36375 and neutral gray FS36270. The typical radome color of semigloss neutral gray FS26270 is also found on ECM covers on the nose. Most stenciling and wing-walk stripes are painted in gunship gray FS36118. High-visibility (but small) Polish national insignias are confined to the fin and the bottom surface of the wings. **FSM**

Available Modeling Paints

FS36375 Gunze Aqueous H308; Gunze Mr. Color 308; Humbrol 127; Polly Scale 505376; Testor Model Master 1729; Testor Acryl 4762; Xtracolor X136
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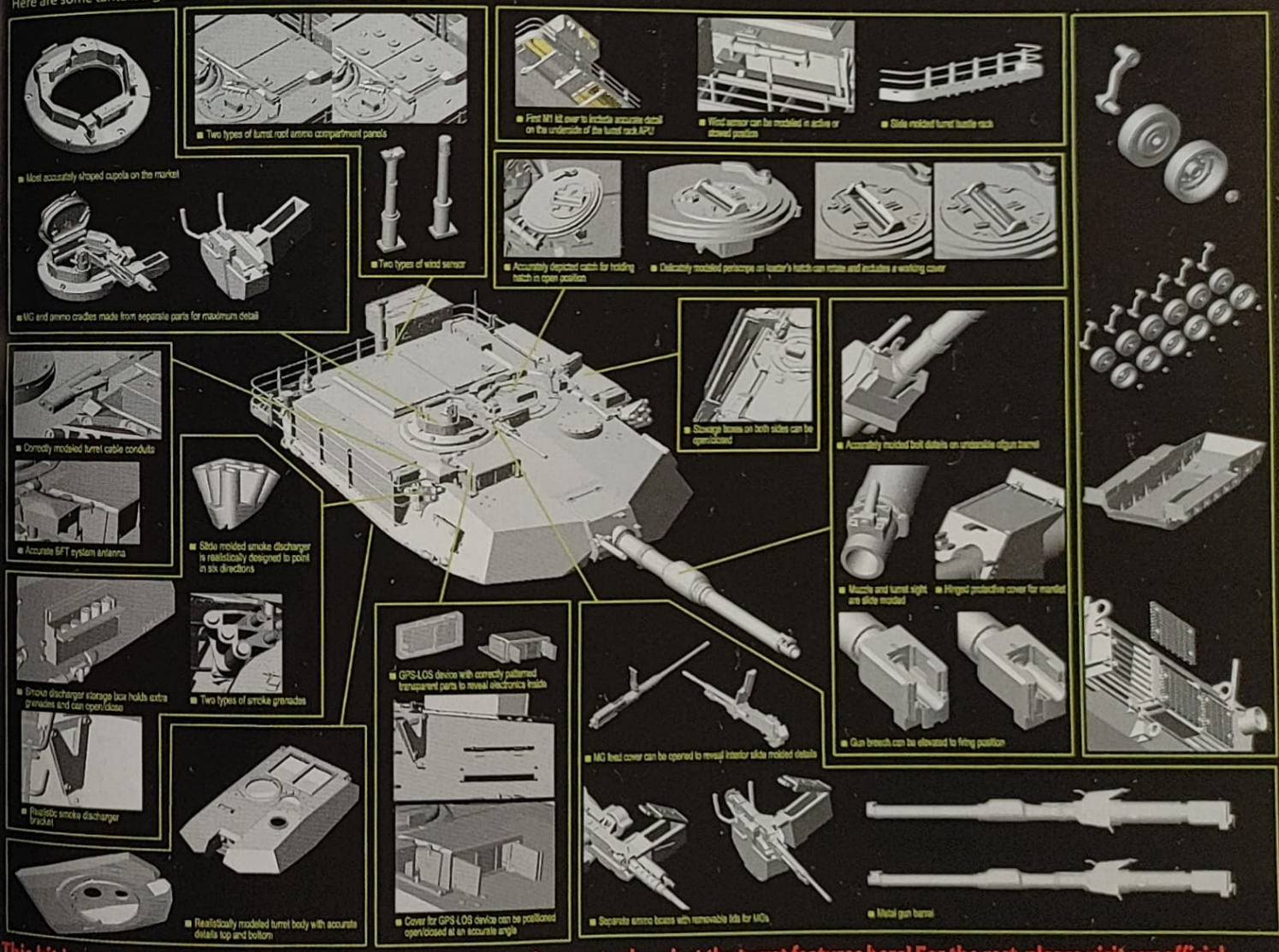
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Delicately modeled periscope on loader's hatch can rotate and includes a working cover
Stowage boxes on both sides can be open/closed
Accurately molded bolt details on underside of gun barrel
Correctly modeled turret cable conduits
Accurate BFT system antenna
Slide molded smoke discharger is realistically designed to point in six directions
Smoke discharger storage box holds extra grenades and can open/close
Two types of smoke grenades
Realistic smoke discharger bracket
GPS-LOS device with correctly patterned transparent parts to reveal electronics inside
Cover for GPS-LOS device can be positioned open/closed at an accurate angle
Realistically modeled turret body with accurate details top and bottom
MG feed cover can be opened to reveal interior slide molded details
Separate ammo boxes with removable lids for MGs
Muzzle and turret sight are slide molded
Hinged protective cover for mantlet
Gun breech can be elevated to firing position
Metal gun barrel

This kit is so packed with amazing features that we had enough space to show just the turret features here! For the rest, please visit our official website http://www.dragon-models.com

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Matthew Usher photos

Monogram's bomb-dropping B-58

Easily one of the most-recognizable U.S. Air Force aircraft of the 1950s, Convair's stunning delta-wing B-58 was the Air Force's first operational supersonic bomber.

The B-58 made its first supersonic flight in December 1956. Powered by four massive General Electric J79 engines, the aptly named "Hustler" had a blistering top speed of 1,325mph. In its prime, the revolutionary aircraft broke 12 world speed records and claimed nearly every aviation award.

The Hustler was one of the first aircraft to depart from monocoque riveted-metal construction and featured revolutionary space-age composites. Heat-resistant honeycomb-sandwich skin panels were used extensively in the wings and fuselage. The aircraft's slender "wasp waist" fuselage was too small to carry bombs inside, so the B-58 carried a droppable one- or two-component pod beneath the fuselage. The massive pod contained fuel, a nuclear weapon, reconnaissance equipment, or other gear.

When the Air Force's Hustler started breaking records, Monogram's 1/121 scale Hustler (kit No. PA-32) started appearing on hobby-shop shelves. According to the instructions, the model was "designed from blueprints and photographs supplied by the Convair Division of General Electronics Corp., and the U.S. Air Force."

Molded in silver-gray plastic, Monogram's B-58 had fine raised panel lines, and a four-color decal sheet. The ship's three crewmen could be seen through the model's opening dorsal hatches, and a crew chief, mechanic, and a starter truck were included for ground support.

Like many kits of the period, Monogram's B-58 included an operating feature. Pushing a button on the upper fuselage dropped the model's nuclear weapons pod, a feature that was prominently illustrated on the kit's unusual vertical-format box art. The model's instructions included bomb-dropping advice that would not likely apply to the full-size version: "Drop pod on ground, grass or rug. Dropping of pod on concrete or a hard floor may break off the mounting tabs." **FSM**

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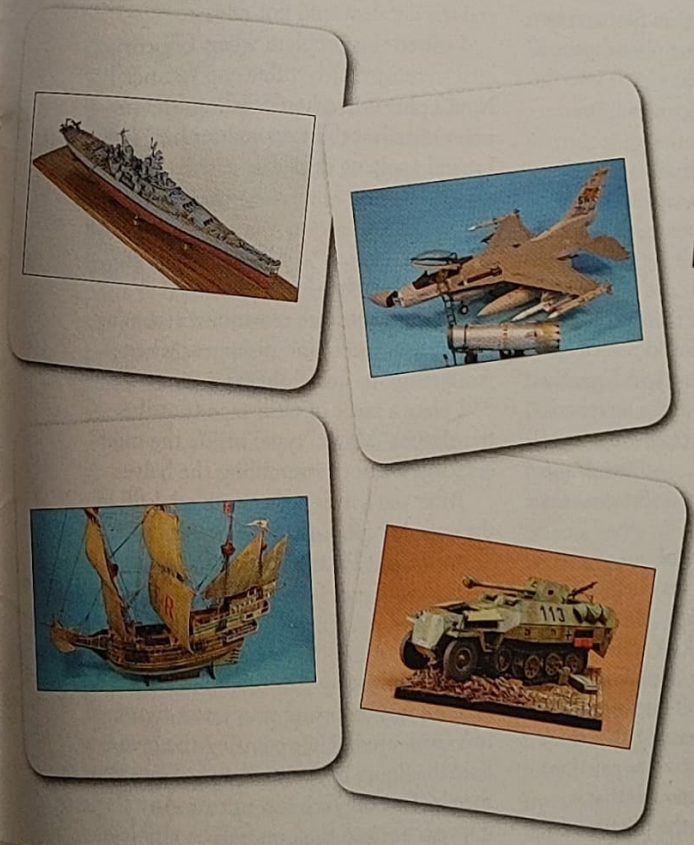

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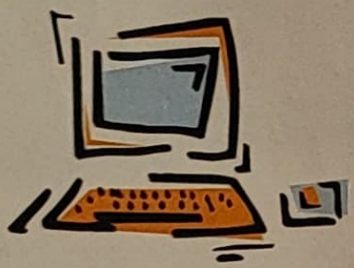

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Reader Tips

Solutions and innovations
Conducted by Jeff Herne

Nylon rigging

I never really mastered the art of stretching sprue. I tried every form of thread and monofilament fishing line to produce decent-looking aerials but had little success. I finally settled on thread from panty hose. Unraveling the nylon material produces individual threads that are thinner than a human hair, and since they are already dark, no painting is required. They stretch and can survive a bump but remain taut. They can be attached with a drop of white glue or super glue. Of course, you may want to have a female friend go buy them for you.

– Brandon Wood
Round Rock, Texas

Getting punched

Ejector-pin marks (tiny, round depressions left by the pins that push plastic parts out of their molds) on kit parts are always troublesome. Some modelers fill them by cutting out a piece of sheet plastic using a hole punch, cementing the plastic into the depression left by the ejector-pin, and sanding the surface smooth.

Unfortunately, these marks often vary considerably in diameter, which complicates the procedure. However, all is not lost! Well-stocked craft stores usually carry hole-punches in various diameters. They rarely sell for more than a couple dollars each, so even those odd-sized ejector marks can be filled easily and quickly. Look for these punches in the scrapbooking section of your local craft store.

– Dave Musikoff
Pasedena, Calif.

Simple burnishing tool

I've got a neat trick that may help with your aircraft canopy frames. Once the painted canopy is dry, take a cotton swab with a rolled paper shaft (the plastic ones won't work), and break off one of the cotton ends. Use the exposed paper shaft to rub the paint off of the areas you don't want. The paper is soft enough that it won't scratch or damage the plastic, but firm enough to remove paint from those unwanted areas.

– Jon Bernstein
Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y.

Box them up

I've only been modeling about a year, and I'm working on my first diorama. I considered the common picture frame around a piece of wood, but I wanted something different for my base. While driving past a local cigar shop, I saw something in the window I knew would work – a wooden cigar box.

They come in all kinds of sizes and depths, so you can even use them for dios with trenches or fox holes. They are strong and somewhat decorative. The cigar maker's name is usually burned on the box, but you can easily put your name plate over it.

– Michael Zona
North Haven, Conn.

In hot water

I used to get frustrated when applying decals because the water would get cold, and the decals would not release.

I solved this problem when I discovered an inexpensive coffee cup warmer. Now, I plug it in when decaling, and my water stays just right, no matter how long I spend applying decals.

– Keith Chambers
Odessa, Texas

Seeing clearly

Do your tiny little clear windows seem to "fly off into space" and disappear when you attempt to install them?

I place a piece of clear tape (not the translucent "Magic" type) inside the model's surface before assembling the halves.

After the halves are assembled, I fill in the outside of the small window with Testor's Clear Parts Cement, and that's it!

– Tom Taylor
Zachary, La.

Mirror, mirror

Here's a way to ensure your latest figure isn't cross-eyed. After painting the eyes, hold the figure up, pointed away from you, then look at the face in a mirror. Any imperfections in the eyes will be visible. This is the same technique the barber uses to make sure your haircut looks good!

– Doug Hamilton
Stamford, Conn.

Real metal ...

After reading many articles about modelers using various items for scale "sheet metal," such as the foil from wine bottles, I began looking for something that could be easily obtained. A recent trip to a local Hobby Lobby turned up a useful alternative. In its metal-working section, the store sells rolls of .005" copper and aluminum. The rolls are inexpensive (about $5) and are 12" x 30". They also carry thicker sheets and embossing tools.

– Brian Black
Vandalia, Ohio

... And real rust

To weather rust on mufflers or other parts, add water to fine steel wool, put it in a container, and let it rust naturally. In a short time, it will turn to a rusty powder. Brush some diluted white glue onto a part, and sprinkle the rust over the part. Let it dry and gently brush off the excess rust. You can also use the rust powder like pastel chalks and brush it on, or add a small amount of water to the rust mixture and use it as rust streaks on bolts. When the rust dries, a coat of clear flat will seal it.

– Edward Barry
Uniontown, Penn.

Getting a grip

When working with resin and plastic parts, finger oils can remove or burnish paint. I find that with the ever-faithful pin vise I can drill a hole into an unseen portion of the part, insert a toothpick with a little super glue, and presto – instant handle. This can also be done to larger parts that you'd pin together for additional strength. I believe that adding holes using this pin vise method helps increase the surface area for final gluing, providing a stronger joint.

– Danny Beedy
Rocky River, Ohio

Water color weathering

I use artist's watercolors to weather my aircraft models. I've used them for washes, exhaust and gunsmoke streaks, fluid leaks, and many other applications. A drop of dishwashing liquid will reduce the surface tension, allowing the paint to flow into panel lines. And, if you mess up, all you need is a damp paper towel to clean things up! The paints are available in a wide range of individual colors, and one set will last for years. I'm still using my original set!

– Josh Kaiser
Quilcene, Wash.

Shipping labels

When scratchbuilding, you often need to attach plans to styrene sheet as a template for cutting. To make this task relatively painless, get some Avery full page labels (No.5165 - available at any office supply store). I print the scanned plans onto the labels, then peel off the backing and attach them to styrene sheets. Once I've cut the parts from the sheet, I remove the label by running the plastic part under warm water

– John Miano
Summit, N.J.

Seat Belts

Here is an alternative to the often-expensive resin and photoetched seatbelts. Roll Milliput epoxy putty into a thin sheet with a rolling pin and a dab of flour (just like pastry), and let it set for about 25 minutes. Then, with a sharp blade, cut thin strips about 1-2mm thick for a 1/48 seat.

Add the belts by dabbing one end with water and securing it to the seat, and then mold the whole strap to the seat before it sets.

– John Morrey
Windsor Meadows, United Kingdom

Measuring cups

For those with small children, the cups that come with liquid medicines are great for mixing paints and other mixtures, like batches of mud or thinned filler putty.

The cups have markings molded right on the sides in several different gradations (tsp, tbs, oz, cc) which help in figuring out the ratios for each item being mixed.

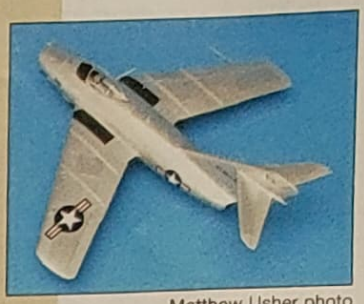
– Peter Marmann
Hicksville, N.Y.

Dull and flat

I've tried all sorts of clear flat on my models but never had much success or consistency. Sometimes the paint was too glossy; sometimes it was too flat. Cost was also an issue; a bottle of clear costs as much as a bottle of paint, yet I use it on everything I build.

After reading about modelers using Future acrylic floor polish for their gloss coats, I experimented and mixed it with Tamiya flat base (X-21). The results are impressive. By varying the ratio of the mix, I can get a wide variety of sheens, from semigloss to a chalky-looking dead flat. I've been spraying flattened Future for almost three years now with no yellowing or fading appearing on the models.

– A.L. Lebron
Teterboro, N.J.



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Trumpeter's 1/35 scale LAV-25

With the current action in the Middle East, Trumpeter's release of the LAV-25 is a topical addition to most armor collections. Molded in light-gray plastic, the parts are crisp but have some flash. The hatches can be posed open or closed. The crew hatches have basic interior detail, but also have ejector-pin marks that need to be removed if the hatches are to be shown open. The hollow vinyl tires fit easily over the wheel hubs and have better detail than resin ones I have in my collection. Four Marine Corps figures are included, but I decided not to build them.

I had to place the driver's view ports before gluing the hull halves together. The

USMC LAV-25 Piranha

Kit: 00349
Scale: 1/35
Manufacturer: Trumpeter, from Stevens International, 856-435-1555, www.stevenshobby.com
Price: $24.95
Comments: Injection-molded, 292 parts (8 vinyl), decals
Pros: Detailed suspension, accurate tires, drilled gun barrel, painting instructions

Cons: Some flash; missing wire cutters, coaxial and commander's machine guns, and rearview mirrrors; mesh frays

Photos by Jim Forbes

lack of grooves for the clear parts to slide into allows them too much room to move. I glued the front of the hull halves together first, then the sides to ensure proper alignment. The fit of the rear hull plate (B1) was poor and needed filler.

The differentials and tie rods for the suspension are delicate, so care was needed separating them from the sprues. To help assure proper "sit" of the model, I glued the shock absorbers to the suspension at the same time as the kingpins. The wheel hubs and steering vanes were left off until painting was completed.

The detail on the hull is good, but it's missing the prominent wire cutter. The turret is missing its wire cutter too, however its mounting bracket is present. Assembly of the turret was straightforward, but the turret basket was trouble. The provided mesh frayed when cut and did not react to liquid cement. I softened the plastic on the basket frame with liquid glue, pressed the mesh into place, then added a bead of super glue to hold it.

I left off the grab handles until the model was nearly finished to avoid breakage. Watch out for the fragile rearview mirror posts; strange, the kit has no mirrors. The tools and clamps are well-done.

The main gun muzzle is hollow – a nice touch, but no coaxial or commander's machine gun is provided. I used music wire for the antennas.

I chose the three-color NATO scheme, accomplished with Silly Putty masks and Tamiya spray paints. The decals worked fine. SFOR and Desert Storm markings are also provided, but are not mentioned in the directions.

I finished my Piranha in 19 hours, a good weekend build for most modelers. My main reference was *Armored Car* by R. P. Hunnicutt. Out of the box, it's a good start to an LAV-25, and the missing guns and wire cutters will likely become available in aftermarket detail sets soon.

– Michael Scharf

ASK 21 Glider

At first glance, releasing a 1/32 scale glider kit seems a bit off of the beaten path for Revell Germany, however the ASK-21 is an extremely popular training and sport sailplane and has been in widespread service since 1979, the longest continuous production of a fiberglass training glider.

Revell has provided nine options on the huge decal sheet, including Swiss, French, and German civilian options, as well as U.S. Air Force Academy, Belgian, and Royal Air Force military schemes. You can have your ASK-21 painted nearly any way you want … as long as it's white.

The cockpit interior uses up 30 of the kit's 60 parts. Detail, in general, is well-

Kit: No. 04224
Scale: 1/32
Manufacturer: Revell Germany, 49-05-223-965-0, www.revell.de
Price: N/A
Comments: Injection-molded, 60 parts, decals
Pros: Quick build, different subject matter, excellent fit, good cockpit detail, decal options
Cons: Damaged clear parts, paint recommendations aren't helpful

done and accurate according to my research on the Web. Curiously, Revell shows two options on the finishing instructions that do not have the streamlined fairing over the main wheel, however there is no easy way to remove this fairing without scratchbuilding the entire main-gear mounts.

The paint call-outs in the instructions refer to Revell paints, which are not readily available in the United States. No FS numbers or other cross-references are given, so I had to determine what shade "moss green" is. I found good color photos on the Web for reference.

I had to trim the interior slightly to get a good fit. The canopies and wheels are designed to move and are easy to install. I only added the canopy mounts, leaving addition of the clear parts until the final step. The front canopy on my sample had been ripped off the sprue, causing an ugly divot on the canopy rim. Even though the front canopy fit was nearly perfect before gluing the fuselage together, I could not get it to close properly after assembly. I suspect I accidentally distorted the nose in an effort to get the interior to fit. The rear canopy fit was perfect. The instrument panel decals fit accurately over the raised details, and they look great.

After the parts-intensive cockpit, assembly of the rest of the kit was smooth sailing. The only difficult seams to fill are at the rear of the wing undersides out to the ailerons, which Revell highlights in the instructions. I didn't need any filler anywhere else thanks to the accurate molding. The wings have an interlocking spar arrangement strong enough to allow the wings to be disassembled just like a real glider.

After sanding, I applied Mr. Surfacer 1000 as a final finish to the seams. This was lightly sanded, and then the whole airframe was primed in Alclad gray primer followed by Testor classic white. I chose the Swiss scheme for its colorful red trim. All decals went down easily over the gloss surface, but I used plenty of water, as they liked to grab the surface quickly and resisted position adjustments. Setting solution was needed only on the rudder stripe.

Revell's glider is an impressive kit of a modern glider. It's a nice change of pace – no engine or wheel-well details to worry about! If you aren't afraid of applying gloss-white paint and have the shelf space for the 20" wingspan, you'll enjoy the experience.

– Chuck Davis

Academy's growing collection of 1/72 scale ground support vehicles provides handy additions to aircraft displays. The latest in its line is this combination of a Dodge ¾-ton WC54 ambulance with a small tow tractor and bomb dolly. An unused long tow bar from the tug sprue suggests this part of the kit may be offered again, perhaps as a Navy carrier-deck tug.

The parts are well-molded, but I noticed the triple pair of louvers on each side of the hood were missing from the ambulance. They'd be pretty small, but should be noticeable in this scale.

Assembly is normal (What am I saying? This isn't an airplane!), but I found the alignment of the ambulance-cab side panels with the hood/roof wasn't good.

The clear windscreen is molded flat, while the front of the cab is curved. I had to snap the windscreen in the middle to get the fit reasonably close. The other windows fit OK.

The back end of the ambulance features the fold-down bench seats, but no litters. Pressing the wheels to the axles risks breaking the thin and fragile differentials and tie rod (Ask me how I know).

The little tow tractor is a snap, as is the five-part bomb dolly.

Decals are mostly for the ambulance and feature large red crosses. They're designed to fit around the fenders and doors, but they didn't react with any of my solvents and look lumpy over the rear door handles.

If you can replace the windscreen on the ambulance and be more persistent with forcing down the decals, you'll find the set a welcome addition to your airfield dioramas. I spent about eight hours on the trio. A handy reference is: http://home.att.net/~dodgewc54/dodge_wc.htm.

– Paul Boyer

U.S. Ambulance & Tow Truck

Kit: No. 13403
Scale: 1/72
Manufacturer: Academy, from Model Rectifier Corp., 732-225-2100, www.modelrectifier.com
Price: $19
Comments: Injection-molded, 91 parts, decals
Pros: Great subjects, good detail, well-printed decals
Cons: Fit of ambulance side panels and windscreen to cab roof/hood is poor

SdKfz 164 Nashorn

Kit: No. 7292
Scale: 1/72
Manufacturer: Dragon, from Dragon Models USA, 626-968-0322, www.dragonmodelsusa.com
Price: $11.95
Comments: Injection-molded, 173 parts (2 cast metal, 17 photoetched, 2 vinyl), decals
Pros: Crisp detail, extra 88mm shells, detailed gun, photoetched parts.

Cons: Gun fixed in the travel position, overly tight track.

Cousin to the Hummel, the Nashorn, or Rhino, employed the PaK 43 88mm gun. With an effective range of 3,500 meters, the Nashorn was an extremely potent frontline infantry-support vehicle.

Dragon's little Nashorn has crisp detail without flash and only light mold-parting lines. Some parts are detailed on both sides, and beveled edges create an in-scale appearance. I like the design of the road wheels that separates the tires from the hubs; they're a lot easier to paint. Extras include styrene 88mm shells, both loose and in a stored arrangement. The photoetched parts replace the styrene cooling louvers and the ammo storage doors.

Without modification, the main gun can only be built in the travel position. The travel lock is molded to the barrel, and you'd have to shave it off and make a new one on the support if you wanted the gun in the firing position.

The eight-step instructions are clearly illustrated using part numbers for locations, along with inset detail illustrations. Painting and marking diagrams are also included. In the painting diagrams, the Balkankreuz and unit emblems are omitted in the rear view. They should be placed to the left and right of the crew entry door, respectively. Well-printed decals for seven vehicles are provided.

Construction was straightforward and the fit was excellent. You can build either an early or late version as both Panzer III E- and J-type drive sprockets are included.

The vinyl tracks were a little short and look too tight. The vinyl did respond to Weld On #3 plastic cement though, making it easy to join the ends.

To facilitate painting, I built the model in hull, gun, and shield subassemblies. I also left the fighting compartment sides off for easier interior painting, then attached them to the hull prior to painting the exterior. I used Vallejo Air Color 81 tank dark yellow 1943 for the base color, then used blobs of Blue Tac to mask the decal locations and sprayed a patchy pattern of 820 off-white of the winter scheme. The decals went down nicely with the help of Micro-Sol.

I weathered with oil paints to give a worn, muddy appearance.

About 16 hours went into my Nashorn. The model measures up to the dimensions in *Nuts & Bolts Vol. 14 "Nashorn."* This was a fun kit and the "Rhino" makes a fine addition to small-scale collections of beginners and seasoned veterans alike.

– Phil Kirchmeier

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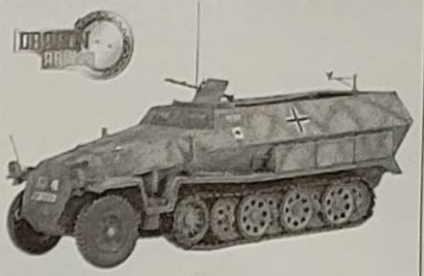
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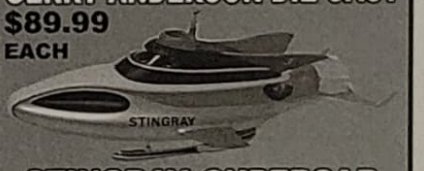

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SdKfz 186 Jagdtiger

Kit: No. 6285
Scale: 1/35
Manufacturer: Dragon, from Dragon Models USA, 626-968-0322, www.dragonmodelsusa.com
Price: $37.95
Comments: Injection-molded, 653 parts (12 cast metal, 44 photoetched), decals
Pros: Typical aftermarket parts provided, including photoetched details, turned-aluminum gun barrel; good detail

Cons: Lots of tiny parts, heavy gun barrel drops in trunions, brackets must be made for exterior tools and cable

Not content with a straight reissue of its popular Henschel-suspension Jagdtiger, Dragon has taken the opportunity to include many improved parts. Molded in light-gray plastic, the parts show excellent detail, especially the texture on the rolled-steel-plate hull and the cast parts of the mantlet. Included are newly tooled road wheels, turned-metal barrel, clear plastic periscopes, and metal tow shackles, pins, and cables. You also get Dragon's new "Magic Tracks," individual-link tracks that require almost no cleanup and fit tightly enough to install before gluing them together. There is a new set of pioneer tools molded without latches, although no photoetched latches are provided in the kit.

Markings are shown for six vehicles, but enough numbers and national insignias are provided for several different vehicles.

Except for the basic gun breech, this Jagtiger has no interior and no crew figures. The rear hatch on the hull can be positioned open or closed, but you'll need to add more of an interior if you leave them open. When installing the spare-track hangers, it's helpful to have a track set built to test fit its position.

A few parts are mislabeled on the instructions, but they are easily identified. The fit of the front plate (D38) required a bit of filler. To make it easier to install the tracks, I didn't glue the upper and lower hulls together before painting, but I did install the fenders to the upper hull.

I used a mix of Tamiya desert yellow, dark yellow, and white for the base color, then applied wavy bands of lightened Tamiya olive green. The painting guide only shows one side of the vehicle I decided to model, so I had to invent the pattern for the other side.

When the paint dried, I installed the running gear. I used 48 pairs of track links per side, then glued the hull halves together. I had to grind the gun mantlet (D37) where it attaches to the breech assembly to get it to fit.

One of the complaints about Dragon's original Jagdtiger was that the gun barrel was too short. Dragon's new turned-aluminum barrel is also too short, but you can extend it about 4mm from the mantlet when you glue it to correct the length. The barrel was a loose fit in the breech, so I shimmed it with paper and attached it with five-minute epoxy. The heavier metal barrel caused the gun to droop, so I had to glue the breech at a fixed elevation.

The finished model matches the dimensions in the *Standard Catalog of German Military Vehicles* by David Doyle. Some experience in handling small parts will be required in building this kit. I spent about 19 hours building my Jagdtiger. Dragon's original kit was good, but the addition of the extras at this price makes this new version a bargain.

–John Plzak

Opel Blitz (Kfz 305 4x2)

Kit: No. 710
Scale: 1/72
Manufacturer: Roden, from Squadron Mail Order, 972-242-8663, www.squadron.com
Price: $9.99
Comments: Injection-molded, 123 parts, decals for six vehicles.
Pros: Excellent detail
Cons: Fragile small parts, sink marks in tires, poor fit of the cab roof

The Opel Blitz was the workhorse of the logistics side of the German Army. Roden's new kit features two different cargo beds, a detailed engine, a cab interior, and an optional canvas top. A sheet of thin clear plastic is provided for the windows. The decal sheet features markings for six divisions.

Despite the small parts, building the chassis was straightforward. The instructions call for silver for all the engine parts, but I think gray was more likely. I painted the radiator hoses black/gray and the engine block engine gray. Large sink marks in the tires were filled with repeated applications of Mr. Surfacer.

Next, I built the cargo bed of the truck and installed it on the chassis. Fitting the canvas top posed no problems.

Building the bodywork in stages brought to light a fit problem between the cab assembly and roof. The noticeable gaps were between the hood/cab roof and door/fender side panels. I filled the gaps with white glue. Roden printed the outlines of all the windows on a clear sheet of photo film, and it was simply a matter of cutting along the lines.

I chose the Panzer-gray war paint scheme, worn by the SS Panzer Division LAH, Russia in 1943. Because many nooks and crannies would have been hard to reach, I painted the subassemblies and parts before assembly. I painted the model with enamels, then applied the temporary winter camouflage with Tamiya snow weathering pastel and added a bit of Tamiya mud pastel. I took the precaution of applying a coat of Microscale Liquid Decal Film to avoid having the decal shatter when soaked. The kit decals were well-printed and went down nicely on a gloss overcoat of Future.

My main reference was *German Military Vehicles* by David Doyle. It has photos of this vehicle, along with a bit of background text.

The finished model measures to scale, and I spent nine hours finishing it. It's a useful addition to "small scale" military vehicle collections.

– Tom Foti

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Fokker D.VI

Kit: No. 603
Scale: 1/32
Manufacturer: Roden, from Squadron Mail Order, 972-242-8663, www.squadron.com
Price: $37.98
Comments: Injection-molded, 103 parts, decals
Pros: Good detail, well-printed decals
Cons: Fit problems, lozenge decals must be cut to fit, no rib-tape decals

Considering the fame of Fokker's E.I Eindecker, Dr.I Triplane, and D.VII biplane, the Fokker D.VI is comparatively obscure. This late-World War I German fighter looks like a two-winged version of the Dr.I. Indeed, many of the parts are the same as those of the triplane. Only 60 were built, and the D.VI was soon eclipsed by the outstanding Fokker D.VII.

Roden's kit is well-molded in light gray styrene, and like the real aircraft, some of this kit's parts are common to the company's Dr.I kit. Control surfaces are all separate and control horns fit nicely in notches. The eight-page instructions include a history, assembly drawings, three marking diagrams, and rigging instructions. The construction steps are nicely illustrated, but precise part location is sometimes unclear. There are three large decal sheets, one for the topside lozenge-printed fabric, another for the underside fabric, and a markings sheet for the three schemes.

The first step was to prime all parts with Model Master gull gray. The Windsock Data File on the D.VI states wood and metal parts were painted light gray. Many parts could be left this color, and it serves as a good under coat for decal application.

The lozenge decals cover a good portion of the model, so it was a pleasant surprise to find they were strong, easy to apply, and conformed well to the surfaces. I used Microset and Microsol solutions. The only catch is the decals are not printed to shape but in large blocks that I had to trim to shape. Rather than using scissors or a knife, I cut the dry decals along the edges of the parts with light strokes from a sanding stick. Blue or pink rib tapes for the wings are not supplied, but Roden suggests cutting your own from an inadequate top-side lozenge supply. Width of the strips is not mentioned. I left them off and may apply aftermarket ones later.

The cockpit interior is well-detailed, but the fit is challenging, and instrument faces and seat belts are missing. Don't forget to drill the holes in the fuselage for the cabane struts and aileron actuator cables before assembling the fuselage halves. From experience with Roden's Dr.I, I learned to omit one ammo box (part D4) and part C8, which can't be seen. The fore decking had to be altered to get it to lie flat on the fuselage edges. Two sets of Spandau machine guns are supplied, one meant for use with photoetched metal perforated jackets that are not included. Holes for the ammo-feed and spent-shell chutes needed to be enlarged.

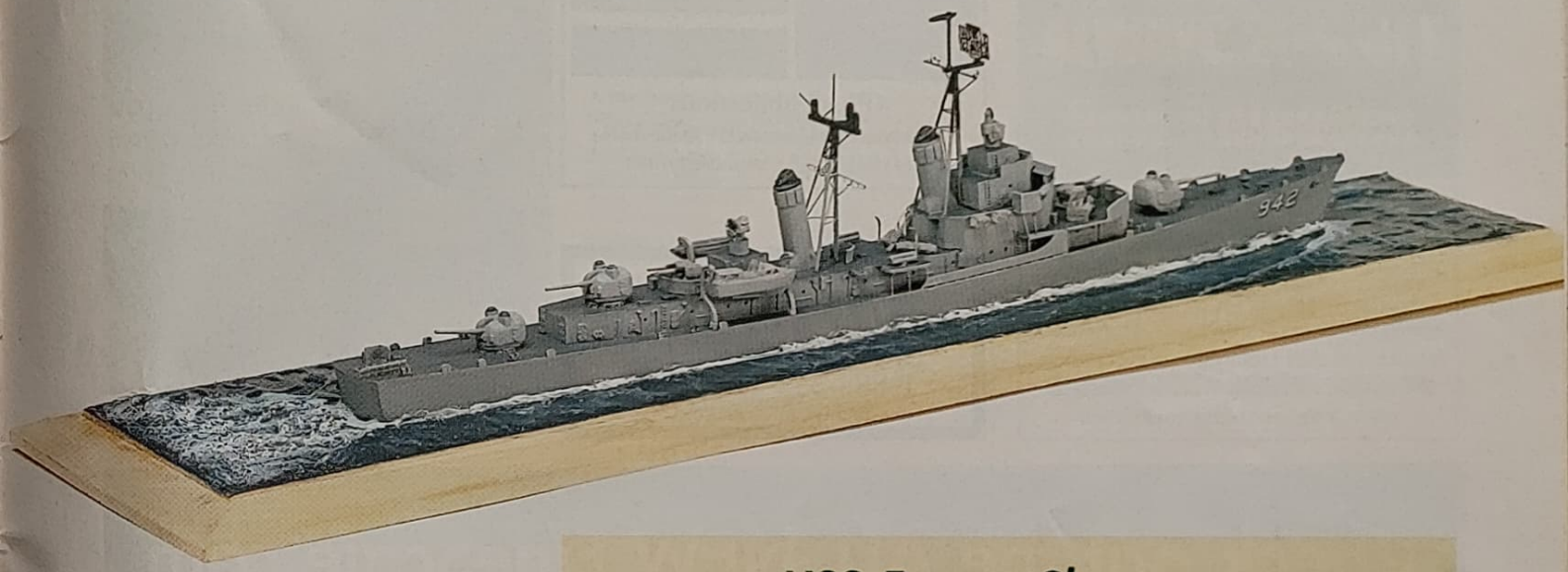
A frustrating and critical part of the assembly was joining the lower wing to the fuselage. Its spar had to be made flush with the bottom of the fuselage to get the right angle of attack and make the struts and upper wing positions come out right.

With that corrected, the forward tripod cabane struts could be fixed in place and the upper wing added. Next, the accurately thin-but-fragile N-shaped interplane struts could be added. Lastly, the rear cabane struts can be made to fit.

I added fine brass-wire pins to help attach the ailerons, elevator, and rudder. Make sure the correct landing-gear struts are used or the axle fairing will come out tilted. The detailed engine fits nicely in the cowl and has a good shaft mount.

The model is accurate in dimension and contour, but like the Dr.I kit, the horizontal stabilizer has a wide, slightly recessed band down the center, and the circular seam on the cowl face plate is missing. I spent about 48 hours on this model, but I want to spend more making proper rib tapes. With considerable effort, a handsome model is possible for modelers who have biplane experience and are able to solve fit problems.

– Dr. Bill Funcke



USS *Forrest Sherman*

Kit: No. JAG003
Scale: 1/700
Manufacturer: JAG Collective, 407-812-1710, www.jagcollective.com
Price: $55.00
Comments: Mixed media, 90 parts (58 resin, 30 photoetched, 2 white-metal), decals
Pros: Crisp casting detail throughout, great subject, accurate dimensions, parts for alternate versions
Cons: Many small, fragile parts; no railings

The *Forrest Sherman*-class of destroyers was the last of the standard destroyers built for the U.S. Navy after World War II. Designed in the late 1940s and accumulating the wartime experiences of previous classes, the *Forrest Sherman*-class served into the 1980s.

JAG Collective has offered a wide variety of Cold War-era ship models since 1999. The *Forrest Sherman* is a cast-resin, waterline model.

The kit is packaged in a heavy-duty mailing tube instead of the usual box, one of JAG's trademarks. Construction is straightforward and simple, although, as with most resin kits, parts must be carefully cut from the pour sprues. JAG provides three options for bridge structures, so modelers can build any of the ships in the class. The instructions are well-written and offer detailed, exploded views for parts placement.

Before I added the detail parts to the model, I cleaned the hull with hot, soapy water to remove any mold-release agents. When the model was dry, I sprayed the horizontal surfaces with Vallejo sky gray and the decks with Vallejo dark gray. These colors matched the prescribed Federal Standard colors of FS 36270 and 36008, respectively.

The photoetched parts are excellent. Although the use of a parts-bending tool is recommended, it's not required. Assembly of the two fragile tripod masts require some patience. The balance of the photoetched parts offers a choice of radar arrays, inclined ladders, antisubmarine depth-charge racks, and the midship bulwarks.

The only downside to the kit is a lack of rails, so aftermarket photoetched rails should be on your shopping list (if not in your spares box).

I finished my *Forrest Sherman* as DD-942, the USS *Bigelow*. I attached the model to a small base with acrylic gel medium, and sculpted the waves and wake in the gel. The whitecaps were dry-brushed with Vallejo off-white.

This is a fine kit, nicely detailed, and anyone with average modeling skills will find it easy to build. With the addition of aftermarket rails, JAG's *Forrest Sherman* will make a fine escort for your Cold War Navy.

- Jeff Herne

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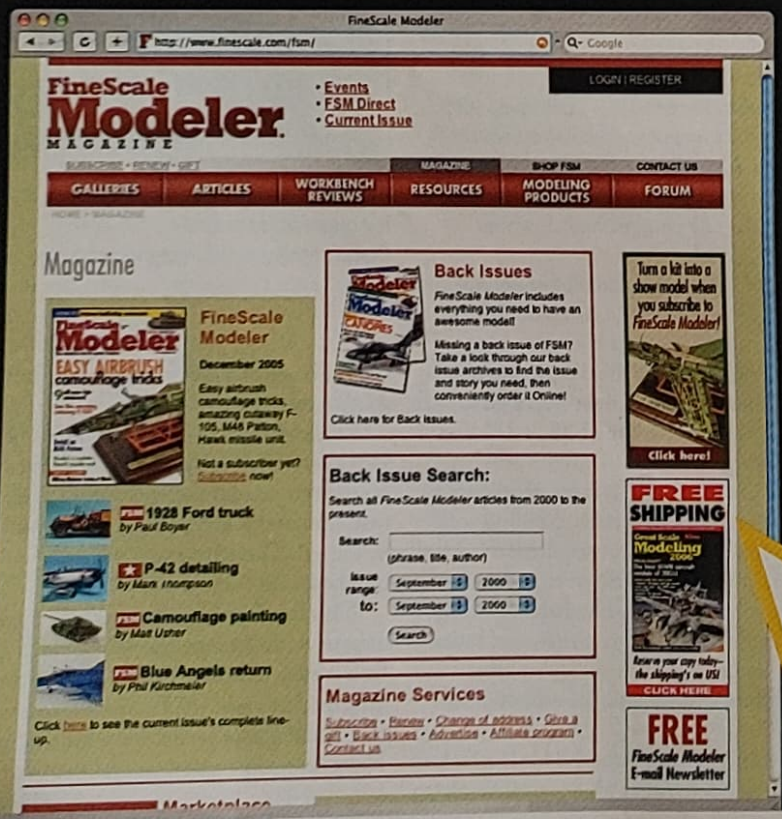

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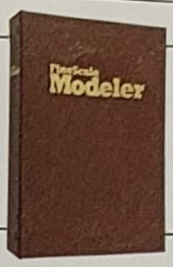

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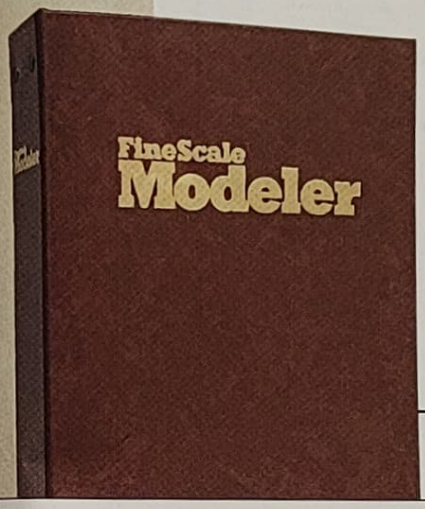

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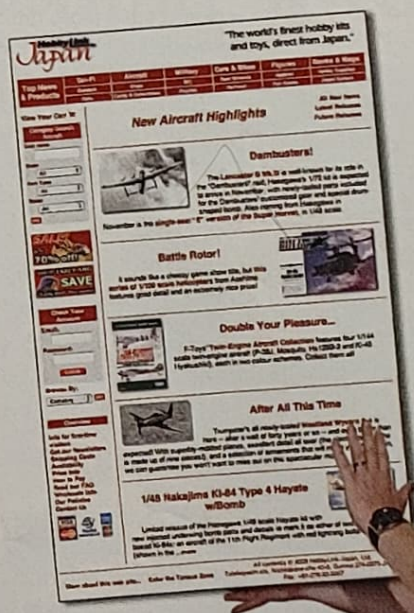
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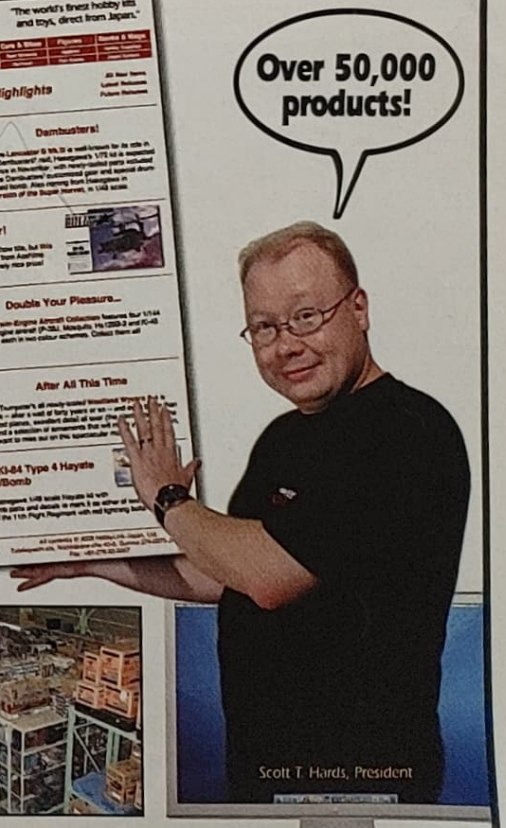

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Questions & Answers

Conducted by Paul Boyer

A clinic for your modeling problems

Airbrushing basics

I've been using Testor enamels for more than 30 years. I still have some bottles that were priced at 15 cents! I've always used paint straight from the bottle, but now that I've started using an airbrush, is this a good idea?

– Wayne Mitek
Edison, N.J.

Paint in the bottle is generally too thick to airbrush well. You'll need to thin the paint at least two parts paint to one part thinner. You can use Testor's own thinner, or hardware-variety "paint thinner," or "lacquer thinner." First, stir the paint in the bottle to make sure all the pigment, vehicle (liquid), and other ingredients are evenly distributed. Then decant the paint into a spare bottle about two thirds of the way. Fill the remaining space with thinner, and stir for several minutes. The paint should be ready to put into the airbrush.

Airbrushing takes a lot of practice, so don't conclude that your first few attempts are a measure of success or failure. Keep at it!

Masking Metalizer

How do I go about masking on Testor buffing Metalizers? I tried to seal the first layer with Metalizer sealer followed by a layer of Future, but the paint is still peeling. I'm using a clear tape that has less tack than drafting tape, and the paint is still peeling. I want to paint some of the panels different shades of Metalizer to get a nice weathered look, but instead I'm getting a "beat up" look because of the peeling paint.

– Matthew Webb
Westminster, Colo.

The risks of masking are inversely proportional to the strength of the bond between a particular layer of paint over the surface. The problem with Metalizer is that it has a weak bond to whatever it is applied. You can apply a sealer or Future over it, but the tape will stick to the sealer, and the sealer will stick to the Metalizer, but the Metalizer won't stick to the surface. That's why it's peeling even though it is "sealed."

When using Metalizer, you should "underpaint" all the other needed colors. Let's say you want an olive-drab antiglare panel on a natural-metal P-51. Mask and paint the antiglare panel first, then when it is dry, mask over it and apply Metalizer. For applying different shades, try cutting paper masks to the panel's size and simply hold them in position as you airbrush the next shade.

Other metallics have better bonding capacity: SnJ Spray Metal is better, and Alclad II is very good. Each has its drawbacks: SnJ has an additional aluminum powder to buff into the paint; Alclad II must be applied over particular primers. I'm afraid there is no perfect solution.

Paint choices

Is it better to use water-based model paints than oil-based?

– Roger King
Warsaw, Ind.

Better? Not necessarily, but some modelers prefer them. Water-soluble acrylics are safer than enamels, but some modelers find them more difficult to apply. Other modelers like the finishes they can achieve with enamels, but overspray and fumes can be hazardous to their health. If you don't have a means of extracting paint fumes from your workspace, I would recommend acrylics. I usually use both types of paint on every project.

Flattening decals

I have several World War II models in my collection that have a natural-metal finish. I used SnJ Spray Metal to paint them, and I'm about to apply decals. Is there a way to apply a flat coat on the decals but still leave the metal finish shiny?

– Phil Modica

You can overspray the decal sheet with a clear flat coat before cutting and wetting the decals. I suggest a light coat of Testor bottled clear flat. You could use an acrylic, as long as you spray it on lightly and don't flood the sheet. Wait 48 hours before wetting the decals. You may have to cut closely around each image as the clear flat overcoat may create its own continuous clear film.

Yellowed white

I applied Future floor polish over Testor flat white in the wheel wells of a model, and after a few weeks, I noticed the white had yellowed. What went wrong?

– Drex Pagtalunan
Beaverton, Mich.

I'm thinking that perhaps the white enamel hadn't cured before the Future was applied. As a result, you've got a chemical reaction between the Future and the paint. Here's a quick fix: Burnish a piece of Glad Press-N-Seal food wrap around the wheel well, then cut open the well and spray a fresh coat of gloss white. If you spray a thin coat, it should be enough to cover the yellow. Don't leave the food wrap on the model for more than 30 minutes, though, as the adhesive tends to stick to the paint more aggressively as it ages.

– Jeff Herne

Digital photo parameters

I'd like to submit digital photos for publication in Reader's Gallery. I have three file-saving settings on my camera and wonder which would be best? Also, can you tell me what color space you need?

– Arnold Tiosejo
Hercules, Calif.

You will almost always hear from print-production people that more is better. A larger file will not necessarily make a better photo than a medium or small file. However, more data and a larger file size almost always give us more options.

Actually, the preferred file format would be either a TIFF, or better yet, the camera raw files. These have not undergone any JPEG compression (and thus possible artifacts). The raw file allows more color adjustment in case of problems with white balance or color space.

As to color space, we would prefer Adobe RGB. sRGB is a smaller color space originally developed for the Web. We receive many sRGB submissions because so many point-and-shoot cameras default to sRGB, but we'd rather have the larger color space of Adobe RGB if you can select it.

– Mark Thompson

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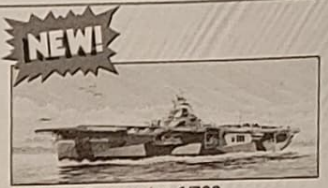

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Coming Events

Modeling meeting places and times

Arizona

Phoenix, Jan. 27-28. 2nd Annual Papago Military Vehicle/Figure Contest, National Guard Base. For more information, contact Avalon Books and Hobbies, 1510 N. Scottsdale Rd., Tempe, AZ 85281; avalonwarbooks@aol.com; 480-994-2263.

Tucson, March 5. TMAC 18th Annual Collectible Toy Show and Sale, Pima County Fairgrounds, 11300 S. Houghton Rd. Contact Jim Russell, 520-748-7968; Lou Pariseau, 520-293-3178.

California

Norwalk, Jan. 29. If It Rolls, Floats, or Flies, Ramada Inn, Grand Ballroom, 12500 Firestone Blvd. Contact Herb Deeks, P.O. Box 6455, Anaheim, CA 92816-0455; 714-774-7326. Visit www.rollsfloatsorflies.com.

San Diego, Jan. 29. IPMS Model Expo Contest and Kit Fair. For more information, contact Jose Gonzales, jgonzalez42@cox.net, 760-430-3005. Visit www.ipmssd.org.

Ventura, Feb. 26. ModelFest 2006, Fairgrounds/Seaside Park, 10 West Harbor Blvd. For more information, contact Vernon Morseman or Stuart Mackie, 805-658-8138.

Buena Park, March 19. 76th Kit Collectors' Exposition, UFCW Union, 8550 Stanton Ave. For more information, contact Edie Keller, P.O. Box 38, Stanton, CA 90680; kitcollectorsshow@yahoo.com; 714-826-5218.

Florida

Venice, March 11. 11th Annual Model Contest and Show. Contact Ken Zuk, mazkaz102@aol.com, 941-426-0774; Randy Witacre, 941-627-3880.

Ellenton, March 11-12. Age of Sail/Age of Steam Exhibition, Manatee Conference Center, Tamiami Trail. Contact Age of Sail, Age of Steam, Harold Nils Pelta, P.O. Box 208, Ellenton, FL 34222; hhpelta@erols.com.

Indiana

Indianapolis, March 25. 13th Annual Model Contest and Swap Meet, Raymond Park Middle School, 8575 East Raymond St. For more information, contact Ron Young, P.O. Box 1376, Greenwood, IN 46142; youngones@insightbb.com. Visit www.ipmsroscoeturner.org.

Michigan

Bay City, March 18. 22nd Annual Model Contest and Show, Bay City National Guard Armory. Contact Michael P. Wood, p51wood@tm.net; John Martin, ktjmartin@sbcglobal.net. Visit www.midmichiganmodelmakers.com.

Minnesota

Stewartville, Feb. 4. "Hope It Doesn't Snow" Show, Stewartville Civic Center. For more information, contact Ed St. Denis, edwardstdenis@msn.com. Visit www.geocities.com/zumbroipms/.

Fairmont, March 25. 1st Annual Model Contest, Five Lakes Centre, 308 South State St. For more information, contact Dave Morrow, dalurch@charter.net, 507-345-4370; Gregory Pausewang, 57chevy1957@charter.net, 507-526-3531.

New York

Binghamton, Jan. 21. 2006 Model Car Swap Meet, Quality Inn, 1156 Upper Front St. Contact Butch Somers, 607-722-2716.

Ohio

Columbus, Feb. 18. 2006 BlizzardCon, Aladdin Shrine Center, 3850 Stelzer Rd. Contact Greg Harting, ipmscolumbus@wowway.com. Visit www.ipmscolumbus.org.

Oklahoma

Tulsa, March 25. 19th Annual Open Contest, European Auto Specialist, 4121 S. 72nd East Ave. Contact Frank Koons, fkoons50@sbcglobal.net, 918-835-5024.

Oregon

Portland, March 3-5. 36th Annual Portland Classic Model Car Contest, Oregon Convention Center, 777 NE MLK Jr. Blvd. For more information, contact carnut@pcez.com, 503-251-8640. Send LSASE to Portland Classic MCC, 13625 SE Stark St. #28, Portland, OR 97230.

South Dakota

Rapid City, Feb. 18-19. 18th Annual Model Contest, Quality Inn. For more information, contact Jerry Norton, gnorton@rap.modco.net, 605-342-6804 Monday-Friday between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Tennessee

Bartlett, Feb. 25. KingCon XII-Coming Home from War, Bartlett Station Municipal Center, 5868 Stage Rd. Contact John Mahaffey, 3448 Hadley Rd., Memphis, TN 38111; 901-458-8511 after 6 p.m. central time.

Cookeville, March 11. 22nd Annual Middle Tennessee Modelers' Association Scale Plastic Model Show and Contest. Contact Glenn Rice, 931-432-4513 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Jerry White, mtmamodelclub@yahoo.com, 931-738-7450. Send a #10 SASE to MTMA, 2568 Nova Circle, Cookeville, TN 38501.

Texas

San Antonio, Feb. 18-19. ModelFiesta 2006, Live Oaks Civic Center, 8108 Pat Booker Rd. Contact John O'Brien, mfdirector@alamosquadron, 512-507-4661. Visit www.alamosquadron.com.

Virginia

Richmond, Feb. 25. Old Dominion Open-2006, Richmond International Raceway, Colonial Building/Home Arts Building. For more information, contact Aaron Winer, 2427 Cedar Cone Dr., Richmond, VA 23233; 804-270-7898.

Washington

Seattle, Feb. 18-19. Northwest Scale Modelers' Show, Museum of Flight, 9404 East Marginal Way S. Contact timndebn@comcase.net, tontoni@comcast.net. Visit www.museumofflight.org.

Vancouver, March 11. IPMS Pearson Modeleers' 2006 Invitational, Pearson Air Museum, 1115 E. 5th. For more information, contact Pascal Valadier, pearson_modeleers@comcast.net, 503-806-5477, fax: 503-249-7276.

Wisconsin

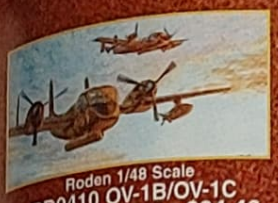
Madison, Feb. 24-25. ModelFest 2006, Radisson Inn, 517 Grand Canyon Dr. For more information, contact Mike Rechlicz, 704 Grace St., Verona, WI 53593; phantomhobbies@yahoo.com; 608-845-7699.

Belgium

Bissegem-Kortrijk, March 25-26. IPMS Moorsele, OC De Neerbeek. Contact P. Debaere, Wulpendammestratt 15, 8630 Veurne, Belgium, filsoft@pandora.be, +32 58 31 73 58.

Canada

Granby, Quebec, March 19. 9th Annual Friendly Meet Model Expo, Hotel "Le Granbyen", 700 Principle St. For more information, contact Daniel Gailloux, plaskit_resin@yahoo.com, 450-776-1936; Daniel Lynch, dan.lynch@videotron.ca, 450-922-3317.



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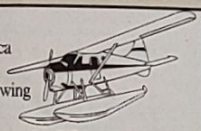

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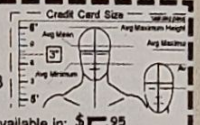

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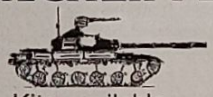

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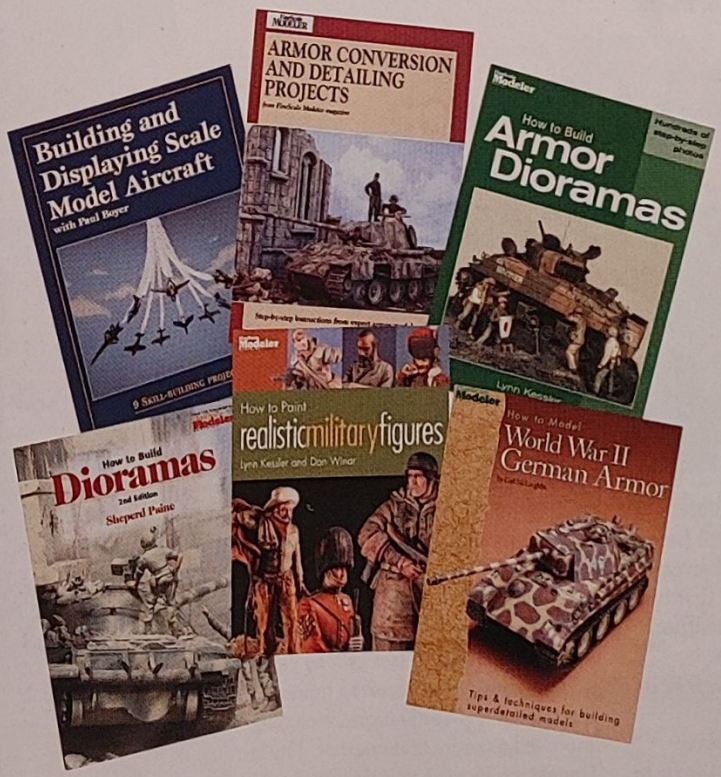

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An F-14B Tomcat, assigned to the "Swordsmen" of Fighter Squadron Three Two (VF-32) launches from the flight deck aboard the *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier USS *Harry S. Truman.* U.S. Navy photo

Grumman F-14 Tomcat

In 1968, the U.S. Navy solicited proposals from aircraft companies for a fleet defense interceptor/air-superiority fighter to replace the F-4. In December, Grumman and McDonnell Douglas were selected as finalists, with Grumman winning the competition in January 1969. The new aircraft was designated the F-14.

The first F-14 was rolled out in December 1970, but the aircraft was lost later that month to a hydraulic failure. Testing of the F-14 continued until June 1972, when the first F-14s were delivered to VF-124 for crew training. The first two carrier-ready squadrons, VF-1 "Wolfpack" and VF-2 "Bounty Hunters," were deployed aboard carrier USS *Enterprise* in mid-1974.

The Tomcat enjoyed relative peace until Aug. 19, 1981, when two F-14s from VF-41 "Black Aces" shot down a pair of Libyan Su-22s off the northern coast of Libya in the Gulf of Sidra. Aggressive actions by a pair of Libyan MiG-23s in this same region resulted in their destruction by a pair of VF-32 "Swordsmen" Tomcats in 1989. During the 1991 Gulf War, Tomcats only had one confirmed kill, an Iraqi Mi-8 helicopter.

The F-14's fame came not from its combat operations, but rather, from Hollywood. The 1986 blockbuster film, "Top Gun," made the F-14 Tomcat every would-be fighter pilot's dream. Ironically, the single F-14 squadron in "Top Gun" downed more enemy "MiGs" than the entire Navy over the F-14's long career.

The Tomcat has received numerous upgrades and modifications, including improved avionics and engines. The last Tomcat, an F-14D, was delivered to the Navy in July 1992. The F-14 will be retired from duty and replaced with the F-18E/F Super Hornet, and eventually, the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. The Navy plans to retain the F-14 until 2010, predominately as a strike aircraft. **FSM**

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